UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
3 1761 01730673 9

BLACKWEL
Oxford, Eng

RELIGIO MEDICI:

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

HYDRIOTAPHIA, OR URN-BURIAL,

A

Discourse on Sepulchral Urns:

BY

SIR THOMAS BROWNE, M.D.

OF NORWICH.

WITH

A Preliminary Discourse and Notes,

BY

J. A. ST. JOHN, ESQ.

LONDON:

HENRY WASHBOURNE, SALISBURY SQUARE,

FLEET STREET.

1841.

PR
3327
A73
1841

867441

CONTENTS.

PAGE

Preliminary Discourse. iii

St. Augustin ... ... —

Religio Medici a confession iv

Handel and Buffon—Cardan and Montaigne ... v

Character of Montaigne's Essays vi

Melancholy of Sir Thomas Browne vii

Healthy Constitution viii

Happiness of Dreams ix

Sonnet from Milton ... ... —

Anacreon's Bathyllus x

Quixotism in Literature xi

Unworldly Philosophy xii

Notions of Friar Bacon xiii

Immortality of the Soul xiv

Philosophy of the Commonwealth xv

Milton—Marvel—Harrington—Sidney xvi

Timid Character of Hobbes, and Sir Thomas Browne ... ——

Objections of Sir Kenelm Digby xvii

Reply to those Objections xix

Sympathies of Sir Thomas Browne xx

Eating of Larks and Crickets xxi

Dissertation on Epitaphs xxii

Landor's imaginary Conversations xxiii

Philosophical Idea of Greatness xxiv

Anatomy of the Human Frame xxv

Obscurity of Sir Thomas Browne xxvi

Contemplations of the Microcosm xxvii

Chinese Maxim xxviii

Piety and Eloquence of Sir Thomas Browne xxix

Digby, Ptolemy and the Koran xxxi

PAGE

Preliminary Discourse.

Object of the Religio Medici xxxii
Errors of great Authors xxxiii
Language of our Ancestors xxxiv
Belief in Impossibilities xxxv
Proof of Contradictions xxxvii
Humility of true Philosophy xxxviii
Trifling Disquisitions xxxix
Cemeteries, Ghosts and Devils xli
Lord Bacon and Dionysius of Syracuse xlii
Philosophy of the Easy-chair xliii
Ideal of a moral Physician xliv
Love of Mankind xlv
Wingrove Cooke and the Examiner ... ... ——
Character of the People xlvi
Charity of Sir Thomas Browne xlvii
Beauty of the Example of Christ xlviii
Spirit of Charity xlix
Conclusion l

Religio Medici

Letter to Sir Kenelm Digby lii
Sir Kenelm Digby's Reply v
Author's Preface vii

Religio Medici.—Part I. 1
Influence of Professional Studies on Religion ... ... —
Spirit of Toleration 2
Aversion to Sectarian Appellations 3
Corruptions of Religion 4
Leaning towards Superstition 6
Influence of Ceremonies 7
Browne a Member of the Church of England 8
Effect of Disputation 10
Advocacy of Truth 11
Plato's Great Year 12
Opinions of Origen 13
Progress of Heresies 14
Milton's sublime Conception of Beauty 15
Disquisition on Mysteries 16
Physical Helps to Belief 17
Misinterpretation of Genesis 18
Contemplation of Eternity 20
Mystery of the Trinity 22
Wisdom of God 23
Employment of the word Idea 24
Beautiful Scenery lost upon the Ignorant 25
Motion of the first Matter 26
Nature does nothing in vain 27

PAGE

Religio Medici.—Part E.

Nature and Revelation 29
Physical Theology 30
Beauty of Nature 31
Ugliness of the Chaos 32
Reading of the Future 34
Discarding of Fortune 35
Poverty of Great Men 36
Fable of Prometheus and Epimetheus 37
Doctrine of Second Causes 38
Reason—Faith—and Fashion 39
Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah 40
Doctrine of Epicurus 41
Book of the three Impostors 42
Miracles of Scripture 43
Trifling Speculations 44
Ark of Noah 46
Doctrine of Guardian Angels 48
Antiquity of the Pentateuch 49
Recovery of lost Writings 50
Characteristics of Christianity 51
Effects of Persecution 52
Death of Socrates 53
Fear of Death 54
Disquisition of Miracles 55
Baldwin, King of Jerusalem 57
Statue of Memnon, and the Pyramids 58
Faith in Witchcraft 59
Magic, and bad Angels 61
Plato and the Hermetical Philosophers 62
Belief in Guardian Angels 63
Origin of the Essay on Man 64
Explanation of the Microcosm 66
Immaterial World 68
Aristotle's Philosophy 69
Paracelsus and Frankenstein 70
Transfusion of the Soul 71
Pre-existence of Souls 72
Transmigration of Souls 73
Ghosts and Goblins 74
Life and Happiness 75
Age of Adam at his Creation 76
Ideas of Death 78
Contempt of Fame 79
Premature old Age of the Author 80
Philosophy of Life 81
Morris-dance Centenarians 82
Philosophy of Lucian 84
Advantages of Death 85
Old Age of the World 87

PAGE

Religio Medici.—Part I.

Fiery Solution of the Universe 88
End of the World 89
Of the Resurrection 90
Ideas of a future State 92
Heaven or Hell 94
Eternal Punishment 95
Punishment of Hell 97
Notions of Honour 98
Bounty of Divine Goodness 99
Vindication of Providence 100
Idea of the Atonement 101
Character of Diogenes 102
Theory of Virtue 103
Idea of the Church 104
False Humility 106
Faith and good Works 107

Religio Medici.—Part II. 109

Philosophy of Cookery ... ... —
Toleration of Foreigners 110
Love of Mankind 111
The Rabble and Gentility ... ... —
Natural Nobility 112
Perfect Charity 113
Significance of Physiognomy 114
Varieties in the Human Countenance 115
Further Considerations on Charity 116
Picture of Disputation 118
Statesmen and Authors 119
National Prejudice 120
Admiration of the Past 122
Theory of Friendship 123
Mysteries of Affection 125
Policy of the Devil 127
Pride and Vanity—Great Linguists 129
Two Opinions: one for show, the other for use 131
Author's Notion of Marriage 132
Freedom from sordid Desires 134
No Man wholly Bad 136
Companions of Solitude 137
Self-Knowledge 138
Happiness of Dreams 139
Infacetiousness of the Author 140
Men prophetic at their Death 141
The Author's Prayer 142
His Notion of Avarice 143
Aristotle's Idea of Liberality 144
Love of God and our Neighbour 145
Conclusion 146

PAGE

Digby's Observations on the Religio Medici. 149
Reading in Bed 150
Following of the Church ... ... —
Notion on Immortality 151
Belief in Impossibilities approved of 152
Ideas of Eternity 153
Remarks on the Trinity 154
Ideas of First Matter 155
Remarks on Aristotle and Galen ... ... —
White's Dialogue de Mundi 156
Toads, Serpents, and Ephemerides of Devils ... ... —
Stoicism of Epictetus 157
Transformations of a Renegade 158
Witches, Magic, and Hermetical Philosophers ... 159
Speculations on Light 160
Plotinus on long Life 161
Bleeding of the Murdered at the sight of the Murderer ... 162
Perishableness of the World 162
Parallel of Life and Death 163
Remarks on Egotism 164
Doctrine of future Rewards and Punishments 165
Love of God 167
Salvation of the Heathen 169
Panegyric of Sir Thomas Browne 170
Theory of Identity 171
Doctrine of Forms 173
Affectation of Sir Thomas Browne 174
Reprehension of Scepticism 176
Uses of Study 177
Force of Habit 179
Making Love out of Stephanus's Thesaurus 180
Conclusion 181
Postscript 183

Hydriotaphia; or, Urn Burial. 185
Introduction by the Editor 187
Epistle Dedicatory 189

Urn Burial.—Chapter I. 193
Shallowness of Graves ... ... —
Antiquity of Burning the Dead 194
Story of Hercules and Argeois 195
Extent of the Practice of Burning 196
Opinions of Thales and Heraclitus 197
Practice of the Brahmins and Druids 198
Egyptian Tombs and Mummies 199
Savage Customs of the Scythians 200
Practice of the early Christians 201
Practice of the Jews 202
Funerals of Animals 204

PAGE

Urn Burial.—Chapter II. 205
Urns found at Walsingham ... ...
Account of Ustrinai 206
Practices of the Romans 207
Population of ancient Britain 208
Norman, Saxon, and Danish Coins 209
Ancient Interment of Coins 210
Sepulchral Lamps 212
Cessation of the Practice of Burning the Dead ... 213
Abstracting of Rings from the Fingers of the Dying ... 214
Funerals of the Ancient Britons 216
Customs of the Northern Nations 218

Urn-Burial, Chapter III. 220
Tombs of the Jews and Egyptians 221
Description of Sepulchral Urns 222
Funeral Urn of Patroclus 223
Laws of the Twelve Tables 224
Superstitious Legend 225
Tomb of King Childerick 226
Disregard of Human Life among the Ancients ... 229
Jewish Hypogæum at Rome 230
Cenotaph of Euripides 231
Preservation of Corpses 232
Salamander's Wool 233
Animal Lamp 234
Burying in Cities 235
——— by the Way-side 236
Phœnicean and Megarean practice 237
Persian and Roman Corpses 238
Disquisition on Skulls 239
Tombs of the Patriarchs 240

Urn-Burial.—Chapter IV. 240
Ancient Belief in the Resurrection 241
Immortality of the Soul 242
Force of Superstition 243
Funereal Flower and Plants 244
Funerals of Infants 245
Closing of the Eyes 246
Funeral Jesters 247
Funerals of Suicides 248
Hades of Homer 249
Eidolon of Hercules 250
Effect of the Belief in Immortality 251
Opinions of Epicurus 252
Dread of Annihilation 253

PAGE

Urn Burial—Chapter V. 254
Duration of Bones ... ... —
Pulses of Methuselah 255
Song of the Sirens.—Homer 256
Vanity of Tombs 257
Evening of the World 258
Ambition of Cardan 259
Good and Bad Fame 260
Effect of Sorrow 261
No Immortality beneath the Moon 262
Real Immortality 263
Contempt of Monuments 264
Grandeur of Tombs 265
Conclusion 266

PRELIMINARY

DISCOURSE.

PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

Irrideant me arrogantes, et nondum salubriter prostrati et elisi a te, Deus meus, ego tamen confitecr tibi dedecora mea in laude tua. Sine me, obsecro, et da mihi circumire præsenti memoria præteritos circumitus erroris mei, et immolare tibi hostiam jubilationis.

CONFESS. DIV. AUGUST. l. IV. c. 1.

INSTEAD of digressing into general considerations of the works of Sir Thomas Browne, of which none is without its peculiar value, I shall, in the present instance, confine my remarks to the "Religio Medici," fairly to characterise and appreciate which will, I doubt not, be regarded as an object sufficient for one discourse. We have here, in fact, to do with a very extraordinary production; much less distinguished, however, for its intrinsic excellence than for a certain peculiarity of manner visible throughout. And, therefore, the aim of our criticism should, I think, be, to detect, and, as far as possible, to explain the latent causes that produced so marked an individuality: in other words, to penetrate through the cloud of rhetorical artifices in the midst of which the author delights

to move, so as to discover the real make and complexion and bent of his mind.

To a certain extent the "Religio Medici" may be considered in the light of a confession. For, although the writer does not therein relate formally and in order those external occurrences and events which constitute the ordinary materials of autobiography, he nevertheless, like St. Augustin and Rousseau, enters somewhat at length into the history of his mind's progress and decisions on subjects the most important. And when a man speaks much of himself, with whatever design, we shall be ourselves only to blame if we fail to comprehend him. Besides, it will soon be evident to the reader that, if not gifted with any very remarkable share of humility, Browne had still not the ambition to appear

"teres atque rotundus."

He was perfectly conscious that his luminous and brilliant character exhibited more than one dark spot; and with a courage not always the property of superior men, not only dared to expose those defects, but, with his own hand, to direct public attention to them.

The motives, however, which determine an author in such cases are not altogether inscrutable. If he acknowledge his errors, if he point out, frankly and boldly, his own imperfections, he will seem with justice to claim the privilege of being equally explicit in what makes for his honour. So much would be required by common candour,

were he treating of another man's character—and should he demand less indulgence when pleading his own cause? Other considerations, too, may have had their weight with Sir Thomas Browne. None knew better than he, that the most useful and the most admired authors are not those spruce and trim personages, who, like Handel at the organ, or Buffon in his study, appear from title-page to colophon in bag-wig and ruffles; but rather those prouder and more confident individuals, whose genius, like a youthful beauty, cares not if it be sometimes caught *en deshabille*.

All his life a sort of "*helluo librorum*," notwithstanding the extraordinary coolness with which, for effect, he speaks of the burning of the Vatican,(1) Browne, at the time of writing this work, appears to have been more particularly conversant with Cardan's autobiography, and Montaigne's Essays, whence he probably borrowed more than one hint, both towards the construction and filling up of his plan. Indeed, the influence of the Gascon philosopher on our older literature was very extensive. His thoughts, sometimes in their native livery, but more frequently in disguise, meet us perpetually; and, considering his character, the wonder, perhaps is, not that he was then so much, but that he is now so little read. Very few writers, ancient or modern, have so ably united the habit of borrowing other men's great thoughts with the power of originating others no less lofty

(1) Religio Medici, p. 49.

or striking. His page, like the earth after the deluge, appears to teem with a new creation. He seems frequently, too, to labour with thoughts too big for utterance, and which, in bursting into birth, expand his French into sublimity. Consequently, perhaps, there is everywhere in Montaigne a charm which most persons who read him find irresistible. He possesses, moreover, the art—if art it be—of investing whatever he touches with a sort of summer dress, green and refreshing, and of pouring over all a warm and bright sunshine, the most enviable, and least imitable gift of style.

Something, no doubt, of all this may be attributed to the circumstances under which he wrote his Essays. Living independently, like a petty prince, in his castle, having, ere he retired thither, shaken hands with all the vulgar objects of ambition, in order to be the more at leisure to clothe his pregnant thoughts with fitting language, he felt calm and self-satisfied, and pursued his studies with a more cheerful alacrity than accompanies the huntsman over the dawn-lit heather. Being perfectly at ease, he could play with his ideas, as he did with his cat, till they became so tame and familiar, so frisky and frolicsome, so full of antics and devilry, that to observe the method of their movements might have relaxed the hatchet-face of a Trappist into a smile. Nature, of course, furnished the basis of all this buoyancy and lightsomeness—but fortune likewise concurred—and the result has been a more than holiday pleasantry,

delightful as drinking Tokay, or sailing on the Bay of Naples.

But Sir Thomas Browne, though consciously or unconsciously he has borrowed much from Montaigne, —who, in that matter, it must be owned, set him the example,—cannot, however, be said to have imbibed any great share of his vivacity. He is, on the contrary, as grave as if his father had been a sexton. In fact he tells us himself that he was born under Saturn, and had in him "a piece of that leaden planet." It was not, therefore, to be expected, though he ate expressly *ad hoc*, abundance of frogs and snails, during his southern travels, and relished them too, that he should be able entirely to shake the lead out of his pericranium; an achievement which a learned judge on the bench once declared to be beyond his prowess.

To speak seriously, Browne's animal spirits appear to have been sluggish, his passions weak, and his temper and disposition anything but social. He loved accordingly to wrap himself in silence—to brood alone over odd subjects—to perform, for his own private recreation, all the antics of dialectics —to tie and unite the knots of syllogisms—so that, in this species of legerdemain, he almost rivalled in skill and accomplishments that renowned personage who

> "——— A rope of sand could twist
> As tough as learned Sorbonist."

But all this was effected in sober sadness. He inherited, or acquired, the most entire command over

his risible muscles, and perhaps thought it a sin, or something very near it, to laugh. There is a smell of mouldering bones, a hue of corpses, in all his ideas. He attempted to solve the enigma of nature, the mystery of life and death, and failing, was filled with gloom. He approached, on tip-toe, the brink of creation, and peering over its battlements upon

"The vast and formless infinite,"

the view, which found him sad, rendered him still sadder.

But it does not follow that all this sombreness led to positive infelicity. There are persons in the world who find asafœtida a perfume; there are others to whom darkness, charnel-houses, coffins, death, administer pleasure; and Browne appears, at times, to have been one of these. His gloom had no acrimony, no misanthropy in it; though he now and then desires us to imagine the contrary. His digestive organs were in good order, and he had pleasant dreams; which one may predicate with still greater confidence of Homer, who would never have applied so many laudatory and endearing epithets to sleep, had not that half-brother of Death used the old rhapsodist kindly. "Let me not injure the felicity of others," says Sir Thomas, "if I say I am as happy as any—'*ruat cœlum, fiat voluntas tua,*' salveth all; so that whatever happens, it is but what our daily prayers desire. In brief, I am content, and what should Providence add more? Surely this is it we call happiness,

and this do I enjoy, with this I am happy in a dream."

I am in some doubt, however, whether this anxious yearning after the shadow of happiness afforded by sleep, should not be considered as an indication that the contentment of which he boasts above, was scarcely fast anchored in his habits. He professes, indeed, to have been "as content to enjoy happiness in a fancy, as *others* in *more apparent truth* and *reality*;" but this implies a contrast between his own condition and theirs. And again, "there is surely a nearer apprehension of anything that delights us in our dreams, than in our waked senses; *without this I were unhappy;* for my awaked judgment *discontents* me, ever whispering unto me that I am from my friend; but my friendly dreams in night requite me, and make me think I am within his arms. I thank God for my *happy dreams*, as I do for my good rest."

But crotchets like these are usually the solace of minds ill at ease—of lovers divided from those they love—of parents, whose adored and lost ones sleep restores, and places once more on their knee—of the poor and persecuted by fortune, who, in their dreams, soar to that independence, which, waking, they perhaps shall never know. Our great poet, bereaved of a beloved wife, opens with Sleep's golden keys the dusky chambers of Persephone, and brings her back for a moment to light:—

"Methought I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me, like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,

Rescued from death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint
Purification in the old law did save
And such, as yet I trust once more to have
Full sight of her in heaven without restraint,
Came, vested all in white, pure as her mind:
Her face was veiled, yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness in her person shined
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night!"

But the idea is common among the poets. Campbell describes the imagination of the weary soldier, slumbering on the battle-field, hurrying homeward to the beloved friends and happy scenes of his youth, which, peradventure, were "to know him no more for ever;" and in a far different strain the vinous old Teian holds sharp remonstrance with the swallow, whose early twittering had deprived him of the company of his friend Bathyllus:

Τί μευ καλῶν ὀνείρων,
Ὑποθρίαισι φῶναις,
Ἀφήρπασας Βάθυλλον;

which is exactly in the spirit of our dream-smitten physician, who, sad and solitary by day, obtains some compensation from Death's half-brother, and imagines himself within his friend's arms.

From what has already been said, it will be evident that we are not to look for that genial warmth in the Religio Medici which is so characteristic of our old friend Montaigne. The very same ideas, which appear so sharp, and glossy, and

lifesome in the southern page, transplanted into the Septentrionalian, assume a rugged, dank, unjoyous aspect, like the mist-dripping plants of a Scotch ravine. At every step we feel the influences of a Boreal atmosphere. The horizon is contracted, the clouds hang lowering about us, and the winds howl drearily over a scene invested by its very monotony with something of the sublime.

Nevertheless, since the author himself appears to derive satisfaction from the investigation of his subject, we also, in a little time, learn to do the same; for habits are soon formed. Besides, there is a certain grotesque earnestness about him which has almost the effect of humour. He grapples with a shadow, a thing of his own creation, a mere hallucination of fancy, with a determination no less resolute than if he had to overthrow a logical Antæos. There is no doubt about his being serious. He pursues the phantom, he puts himself in an attitude of attack, he brandishes his weapons, and, like the knight of La Mancha, seems fully persuaded that he has gained a victory, though his antagonist may all the while have been but a syllogism with one leg. By degrees, however, this skiamachy grows amusing. We experience at every page more and more of sympathy for the writer, and, at length, consent to take all his fancies, all his theories, all his rhapsodies, at his own valuation.

And this more, perhaps, than anything proves the author to have possessed very great skill and

ability. He had to entertain the reader through a whole volume on one topic—his personal belief—diversified, no doubt, but still one topic; and he has succeeded so well, that very few, I imagine, ever drew near the last page of the "Religio Medici" without regret. Many writers, with precisely the same subject to handle, and endowed with equal mental powers, would, notwithstanding, have produced an inferior moral effect. They would have let in upon it the lights of a coarse, worldly philosophy. The wings of contemplation, soiled and clogged with the dust of the charnel-house, would have beaten about the crust of our own planet, and soared no more to the stars. Fact would have been piled upon fact, experiment upon experiment, gloss upon gloss. The practical would have triumphed over the speculative. Through the labyrinths of material or atomic theories, "done into English by several eminent hands," the reader would have been conducted, in mire and humiliation, to confound his destiny with the frog's, and to shape his intellectual and moral course accordingly. From this bestial taint the "Religio Medici" is free; which must, however, be attributed solely to the influence of Christianity, since, in a heathen country, and in heathen times, the creed of the author would probably have been that of Epicurus: (*)

"Primum animum dico,—mentem quem sæpe vocamus,—
In quo concilium vitæ, regimenque locatum 'st,

(*) Conf. Rel. Med.

Esse hominis partem nihilo minus ac manus, et pes,
Atque oculi partes animantis totius extat," &c. (3)

Sir Kenelm Digby, in his "Observations on the Religio Medici," which the reader will find at the end of Sir Thomas's treatise, cites, from our learned Friar Bacon, several very admirable remarks on the effect of different branches of study in modifying a man's creed. "Those students who busy themselves much with such notions as reside wholly in the fantasy, do hardly ever become idoneous for abstracted metaphysical speculations; the one having bulky foundation of matter, or of the accidents of it, to settle upon,—at the least with one foot; the other flying continually, even to a lessening pitch in the subtile air. And, accordingly, it hath been generally noted, that the exactest mathematicians, who converse altogether with lines, figures, and other differences of quantity, have seldom proved eminent in metaphysics, or speculative divinity. Nor, again, the professors of these sciences in the other arts. Much less can it be expected that an excellent physician, whose fancy is always fraught with the material drugs that he prescribeth his apothecary to compound his medicines of, and whose hands are inured to the cutting up, and eyes to the inspection of anatomised bodies, should easily, and with success fly his thoughts at so towering a game, as a pure intellect, or separated and unbodied soul."

Digby himself evidently viewed the question in

(3) Lucret. l. iii. p. 70, ed. Baskerville.

the same light as the friar, whose works might still be studied with advantage; and, alluding to the notions of Browne, says, "Surely this acute author's sharp wit, had he orderly applied his studies that way, would have been able to satisfy himself with less labour, and others with more plenitude, than it hath been the lot of so dull a brain as mine, concerning the immortality of the soul. And yet I assure you, my lord, the little philosophy that is allowed me for my share, demonstrateth this proposition to me, as well as faith delivereth it; which our physician will not admit in his."

In Sir Thomas Browne's demiscepticism on this great question, we discover a proof that, recluse as he was, his mind had not escaped the sinister influences then in active operation throughout Europe. Along with a spirit of inquiry, the natural offspring of the Reformation, another less estimable spirit, always existing, had gained strength—the disposition to confound truth with error, and to mistake for philosophical courage, an ostentatious hostility towards both. Similar tendencies were observable in the European intellect during the age immediately preceding the French Revolution; and must be regarded as a consequence of what was going forward at the period of which we are speaking. Men had arisen gifted with the faculty to discern the chains wherewith custom had, until then, bound the mind, and bold enough to attempt the breaking of them. Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Gassendi, and a phalanx of coadjutors, set the example of independent thinking;

and the ambition to co-operate with these seized many whom nature never designed to become leaders in philosophy. Our own countrymen, in whom, though apparently divided from the world, the universal pulse of humanity beats as strongly as in the inhabitants of the greatest continents, may be said to have pushed forward, and led the van at that period; and, though their achievements cannot be regarded as unmixed good, it will ever be recorded of them in the history of philosophy that no men have exhibited greater energy, loftier views, or a more daring freedom of speculation.

Chiefly by their instrumentality, indeed, a reform was effected in philosophy; and in politics, although, from being too abruptly precipitated into trial by events, it fell short of the point aimed at. Time had not been allowed for moulding the public mind into the proper shape, for imparting to it, as a mass, those powerful impulses which might have gone on operating irresistibly for ages, before the Commonwealth sprang into existence at the command of a few highly-educated gentlemen, impatient of monarchy, and eager to realize on a grand scale those schemes of national happiness and prosperity suggested to them by their peculiar studies. The establishment of the Commonwealth, however, was not a vain act. It influenced, and will for ever influence, the politics of the world; and, though its direct agency be more visible in another hemisphere, the leaven it left behind is not yet *effete* in Europe, as the events of our days have proved.

But the effect on literature of times like these would necessarily be twofold. Upon characters instinct with passion and energy, prompt to act, no less than to speculate, proud, vehement, impetuous, such, for example, as Milton, Andrew Marvel, Harrington, Algernon Sydney, it would operate as an irresistible incitement to mingle in public life, and sink or swim with the cause of freedom; while upon the gentler and more timid, upon those who dread, and therefore imagine they scorn the crowd, its necessary fruit would be a deeper and more complete and unbroken retirement. And such, it is well known, was the case with Hobbes, who trembled in his very closet at the shouts of the agora, even as re-echoed by the page of history; but pre-eminently was it so with Sir Thomas Browne, whose morbid sensibility shrunk in alarm from all contact with the rough humanity of the crowd, always terrible to those who are ignorant of its nature.

We may thus, in great part, account for the ascetic tone which the speculations of this remarkable writer assume. The agitation and turmoil of the world around scared him into himself, where, like Lord Bacon's long-lived hermits in their subterranean abodes,(4) he dug and quarried to the best of his ability for the benefit of future generations. In studying his productions, therefore—more particularly the one before us—we may narrow our view almost to a point. The author,

(4) New Atlantis, p. 254.

his constitution, his creed, the reasons on which it was erected, or the doubts that sapped it—such are the ingredients of the piece. Nay, as we have seen above, his very dreams are brought into play; and elsewhere the privacy of his bed-chamber is laid open, that we may behold him upon his knees.(5)

This extraordinary communicativeness, which many will probably consider, as I do, one of the principal charms of the "Religio Medici," somewhat moves the bile of Sir Kenelm Digby, who had not, at that time, composed his own very singular Memoirs. He may, however, on these points, be supposed to represent a very large class of persons, who would have an author always appear before them, like an actor on the stage, in starched, point-device manners, as far removed as may be from those wherewith nature and habit have clothed him. I would not reproach Digby with applying one measure to his neighbour, and another to himself. He possibly could not, at this time, have believed, even had a Calchas foretold it, into what a torrent of egotism his passion for Venetia Stanley would one day melt him. His objections, no doubt, reveal honestly what he felt, in common with many others; and, therefore, in replying to them, I may anticipate what, by critics of similar character, would still be urged against the confessional portions of the "Religio Medici."

"What should I say of his making so particular a narration of personal things," inquires Sir Kenelm,

(5) Relig. Med. p. 173.

" and private thoughts of his own, the knowledge of which cannot much conduce to any man's betterment; which, I make account, is the chief end of his writing this discourse ?" Such is ever the language of contemporaries. They conceive themselves to be overshadowed by the lofty pride of him who, in his published works, dares to speak of himself. Gladly would they, in most cases, do the same; but, wanting the courage, feel their jealousy excited by the boldness of any who appear to be on better terms with the public, from the confidence with which they entertain it on subjects connected with their own private personal affairs. They would seem never to reflect, that those very particulars which to them appear most frivolous, are sometimes dwelt on with most pleasure by posterity, as supplying an index to many of the secret motives and causes which determined the conduct, or shaped the peculiar opinions of a distinguished writer.

Sir Kenelm Digby then enumerates, but with much courtesy, the several circumstances which, in his judgment, our philosophical physician should have omitted to dwell upon. " As where he speaketh of the soundness of his body—of the course of his diet—of the coolness of his blood at the summer solstice of his age—of his neglect of an epitaph—how long he hath lived, or may live—what popes, emperors, kings, grand seigniors, he hath been contemporary unto, and the like." But the Martyr-Tyrant's gentleman of the bed-chamber must have been somewhat out of humour when he wrote this.

For who can fail to perceive, that most of the particulars which he condemns as insignificant, were in truth possessed of very great interest? There is more in every book than what the characters of the alphabet represent. The very order and sequence of the words reveal something of the writer's character. In certain passages of authors we discover words which they thought but dared not write, together with many which they have written, but did not believe. Nothing, however, so much helps to the proper understanding of an abstruse writer as an acquaintance with his physical conditions, a thorough knowledge of which might almost enable a physiologist to determine *à priori*, what on every subject the complexion of his creed would be.

But into what errors an imperfect acquaintance with such points is apt to betray us, the case of Sir Thomas Browne may suffice to show. For example, observing his thoughts to be sombre, and clustering frequently and obstinately round the idea of death, our first inference would unquestionably be, that he was a man of infirm body, whose sufferings and feebleness so shaped the vista of his imagination, that it always terminated in the tomb. But from coming to this erroneous conclusion we are preserved by the author's frank disclosure that he was of "sound body."

Again, though beaten from this point, we might break ground on a neighbouring position, and maintain, that however excellent his constitution and general health may have been, he must still have fed habitually on such articles of food as, accord-

ing to Burton, ' generate and nourish dismal thoughts, line a man's brain with black, and make over the fee-simple of his lucubrations to the devil. Here, once more, the tendency towards rash inference is repressed, by Browne's prudently making us, in confidence, acquainted with " the course of his diet." On this head his declarations are as full and frank as need be. " I am of a constitution so general," he observes, " that it comforts and sympathizeth with all things. I have no antipathy, or rather idiosyncracy, in diet, humour, air, anything. I wonder not at the French for their dishes of frogs, snails, and toad-stools; nor at the Jews for locusts and grass-hoppers; but being among them, make them my common viands; and I find they agree with my stomach as well as theirs. I could digest a salad gathered in a church-yard, as well as in a garden."

" There is," as Sir Hugh Evans phrases it, " good reasons in this." We do not, in fact, appear to possess, as yet, a true Catholic taste, or to have included in our list of edible things half the articles which nature intended us to devour. To say nothing of the frogs, snails, &c. about which we are still in debate with the French, there is a delicacy in fashion among the Siamese which should forthwith find a place upon all civilized tables. A recent traveller in the Burman empire, wholly unendowed with the latitudinarian palate of our physician, but tormented with all those antipathies and idiosyncrasies, some modification of which makes up the characteristic of so many Englishmen, suf-

fered his stomach to exhibit most rebellious symptoms, at mere sight of the dainty, though served up in plate of gold. "There was," says he, speaking of a repast, prepared expressly for his entertainment, —"there was but one article decidedly objectionable, a dish of crickets fried in sesamum oil." Here the uncatholic islander, one of the

"Penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos,"

in tastes and habits, no less than in geographical position, peeped unequivocally forth. Wherefore should the cricket be objectionable? What ungentlemanly habits can be laid to his charge? Is he uglier, or less delicate than the hog or the eel? For my own part I esteem crickets as good eating as larks; and since we every day feed on worse things, think that, with Sir Thomas Browne, we should educate our stomachs to digest everything.

To return: granting, the critic might say, that he had the nerves of a vulture, and a stomach to match, there is a third cause of "low spirits" yet to to be enumerated, which possibly operated upon him—he may have been troubled with ungovernable passions, and indulged them to excess. Still our conjectures differ *toto cælo* from the truth. His temperament came not within that category. On the contrary, the philosopher himself boasts, or complains,—for we may understand him either way,—"of the coolness of his blood at the summer solstice of his age."

With respect to the indifference about an epitaph, I can by no means comprehend the objection

of Digby. The critic, at this stage of the business, appears to have grown exceedingly capricious and hard to please; since it was but carrying one step further his contempt of death, which, nevertheless, finds great favour in the eyes of our courtly and ingenious observer. "I must needs acknowledge," he says, "that where he balanceth life and death against one another, and considereth that the latter is to be a kind of nothing for a moment, to become a pure spirit within one instant; and what followeth of this *strong thought*, is extreme handsomely said; and argueth very gallant and generous resolutions in him."

But if we take this unearthly view of the matter,—and I admire those who can,—why should not his stoical disdain of fame, (affectation, perhaps, no less than the other,) equally command our admiration? The epitaph, in itself, is nothing. Few live long in the memory of mankind through those "sepulchral lies," or truths, which are engraved upon their tombs. He would express, by this place, his readiness to encounter total oblivion, to be blotted out from all human registers, to leave behind him upon earth no more trace than the cloud which swept turbulently during the celebration of his obsequies through the sky.

And is not this every way as "gallant and generous a resolution" as his indifference in the matter of life and death? Perhaps, if our thoughts were sifted to the bottom, it might be found that many of us scarcely care to live at all, except for the purpose of writing our names ineffaceably on

the history of the world. Our whole lives are devoted to the erection of our own cenotaph. It is not existence *par se* that we covet. That, though a pleasure, is not pleasure enough. The leading desire in all noble minds, is to form one of that imperishable band, who, for their genius or their virtue, have by the gratitude of their fellow-men been converted into a kind of heir-loom, which humanity will transmit, with delight and pride, from age to age for ever. Now, voluntarily to relinquish the hope to be numbered with these, I hold to be a still greater effort of self-denial, than "to bid farewell to the sun, and sleep till the resurrection:" and no less than this is implied, how truly I will not say, in Sir Thomas Browne's affirmation, that, provided his deeds were approved elsewhere, he cared not if his advent upon earth were not commemorated even so much as by an epitaph.

In the passage which follows immediately on the heels of the above, we detect undoubted traces of a low and vulgar way of thinking. "Would it not be thought," inquires Sir Kenelm Digby, "that he hath a special good opinion of himself (and indeed he hath reason) when he maketh such great princes the land-marks in the chronology of himself?" To a "gentleman of the bed-chamber" every prince seems great, perhaps; but there are others who frame to themselves very different conceptions of human greatness. Mr. Walter Savage Landor has somewhere, in his "Imaginary Conversations," (too excellent to please generally,) a remark which I would place in juxta-position with Digby's. With

the confidence characteristic of the class he describes, Mr. Landor observes, that to be numbered among great writers, is to share a nobler destiny, to wield a more potent sceptre, than ever yet belonged

" To King or Kaisar ;"

and, in a note, subjoins Plutarch's kindred remark, that " Juba was fortunate in having been taken prisoner by the Romans, which procured him the advantages of a liberal education, and the honour to be numbered, barbarian as he was, among celebrated writers."

I take this to be an answer to Sir Kenelm's courtier-like remark. If not, it may be added that history must be unworthy of the slightest credit if, in every quality which goes to the making up of true greatness,—learning, genius, virtue,—Sir Thomas Browne was not very much superior to any of the " popes, emperors, kings, or grand seigniors," whom he saw descend into their graves. For, among philosophers, the sitting upon velvet cushions, and wearing a golden hoop on the brow, do not constitute greatness. They require a mind from which every trace of sordid selfishness has been obliterated, which converses habitually with the good and the beautiful, which loves whatever is noble, scorns whatever is base ; and to them it matters not at all whether the man in whom these qualifications are found happen to stand at the head or the foot of the artificial ladder of society. They at once pronounce him great, and conceive that he does

princes an honour when he condescends to mark the chronology of his thoughts by the movements they make on their gilded stools, or the events by which they are removed from them.

But I have not yet considered or enumerated all the objections made by Digby to the confessions of Sir Thomas Browne. Having delivered himself of the above, he condescends to adopt the tone long since fashionable among reviewers, and says—"Surely, if he were to write by retail the particulars of his own story and life, it would be a notable romance, since he telleth us, in one total sum, it is a continued miracle of thirty years." Now, did the critic, or did he not, understand the chastened and beautiful passage of the "Religio Medici," to which he so sarcastically alludes? The author, having solemnly contemplated the anatomical structure of his own frame—having viewed with earnest attention its curious, intricate, and delicate workmanship—at length, from a pious sense of human infirmity, and of how incessantly it stands in need of the Divine protection, concludes, that to keep so complicated a machine, during thirty years, in motion, can be regarded as nothing short of a perpetual miracle. A very similar reflection suggested itself, under like circumstances, to David's mind:

> "Strange that a harp of thousand strings,
> Should keep in tune so long!"

And yet few, perhaps, will on this account reproach the psalmist, or suppose him to have enter-

tained any design of converting his life into a romance.

It seems probable, moreover, that the critic was mistaken, as critics often are, in his interpretation of the passage immediately following, on which he has this remark: "Though he creepeth gently upon us at the first, yet he groweth a giant, an Atlas, (to use his own expression) at the last." It must be admitted, that in the part of the "Religio Medici" which called forth this animadversion, the language of Sir Thomas Browne is either obscure, or open to the charge implied in Digby's criticism. Occasionally, however, Browne is certainly obscure. Neglecting to combine his ideas harmoniously together, to render one proposition an easy step to the succeeding—an art which sometimes causes a very profound author to seem perspicuous,—he rudely huddles his thoughts together, or sets them up on end, like isolated rocks in the midst of chasms dark and perilous, over which we must leap continually, to the great hazard of our necks, if we would explore the whole extent of his creations. And this is more particularly true of that portion of the work now under consideration. That such obscurity, breaks, and abrupt transitions are defects, and grievous ones too, in an argumentative treatise, no one will deny. But, after all, the question is, is he worth understanding? Which, if we answer in the affirmative, it next follows that he must be worth studying, without which we shall assuredly not understand him.

To proceed at once to the matter in hand: "For

the world," says Sir Thomas Browne, " I count it not an inn, but a hospital; and a place not to live, but to die in." This, though somewhat forced and extravagant is intelligible. He undoubtedly here means, by " the world," that material domicile appointed to be our prison,—albeit not an uncheerful one,—during the state of probation in which we exist here below. He then continues:—" the world I regard is myself; it is the microcosm of my own frame that I cast mine eye on: for the other, I use it but like my globe, and turn it round sometimes for my recreation." Here the perspicuity of the sentence is no doubt disturbed, in some degree, by quaintness and affectation; but we can still see our way, and arrive, I think, at a pure meaning, as devoid of overweening vanity as anything in the whole work. He is clearly not contrasting himself, Thomas Browne, with other men, and the general frame-work of society, often, in conventional phraseology, termed " the world"—the parallel lies between man, as an intellectual being, and that stupendous elemental structure which he inhabits; and he prefers, he observes, contemplating himself, (as that representative of human nature which he could most conveniently command) to the investigation of those laws which regulate the movements and preserve the existence of the universe. So far there is no remarkable display of personal vanity. Socrates, the wisest at once and humblest of men, pursued the same course, and probably was the model which Browne, when he wrote the above, had in his mind.

But the greatest pinch is in what immediately follows: "Men," he says, "that look upon my outside, perusing only my condition and fortunes, do err in my altitude, for I am above Atlas's shoulders." The first person singular sounds, it must be acknowledged, rather egotistically in this sentence; and Digby accordingly, with all the indignation of a modest man, exclaims—"Aha! then, we have you here, Sir Esculapius!—'Above Atlas's shoulders!'—On what, I pray, will you bestow the name of vanity, and that too the most egregious, if this be not such?"

In criticism, however, as in every thing else, it is useful sometimes to adopt the Chinese maxim of "slow and sure." Perhaps our Galenian, if allowed the privilege of interpreting his own thoughts, may be found not to be speaking, in this place, of himself as an individual at all—not as "*hic homo*," but as "*homo*." No doubt the meaning of the passage, considered by itself, is just what Digby understood it to be. But what book could bear to be judged of on this principle? In another passage of the "Religio Medici" we find these words—"I do confess myself to be an atheist." What, then! was Sir Thomas Browne an unbeliever in God? Not in the least:—the divinity in respect of whom he confessed himself to be an atheist, was Mammon, the object of the world's idolatry. Nay, in the Scriptures themselves we find this atheistical position—"There is no God!" And how comes it there? Very naturally,—"The fool hath said in his heart—'there is no God.'"

Let us, above all things, be just in our decisions, and where we err, let it be on the charitable side. Upon the whole, however, there appears to me, in the matter in hand, greater difficulty in going wrong than right, since we have but to peruse the context with attention, to be satisfied that Sir Thomas Browne is not speaking in his own person, but as man, as a being created in the image of God, "placed a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honour." Let us examine the whole passage, which is full of eloquence, and of piety no less. "The earth," he observes, "is a point, not only in respect of the heavens above us, but of that heavenly and celestial part within *us*." It is quite clear that these words carry us beyond the circle of egotism, and merge all idea of individual vanity in the great ocean of human nature. "That mass of flesh that circumscribes *me*, limits not *my* mind; that surface that tells the heavens it hath an end, cannot persuade *me* I have any." This is the exaltation of man as a species, the soaring holy ambition of the whole race, borrowing the voice of one of its members to express that "yearning after immortality," which constitutes one of the strongest proofs that such is our destiny. "I take my circle to be above three hundred and sixty. Though the number of the arc do measure *my* body, it comprehendeth not *my* mind. Whilst I study to find how I am a *microcosm*, a little world, I find *myself* something more than the great." Yet not himself only, but all men. In the pride of this

passage the author intended that Digby should participate. His design was to compliment both him, and you, and me; and to remind us that the soul which animates our frames, is a substance far nobler than any with the accidents of which our senses make us acquainted. And this he expresses in language of surpassing grandeur. "There is surely a piece of divinity in us, *something that was before the elements, and owes no homage unto the sun.*" But this is not all. "Nature tells me I am the image of God, as well as Scripture: he that understands not thus much, hath not his introduction, or first lesson, and is yet to begin the alphabet of man!"

Can there now be any doubt that Sir Kenelm Digby has misinterpreted the language of our author, setting that down as an ebullition of personal vanity, which was designed to be a kind of apotheosis of human nature? But the reader will, perhaps, remark, that considering the rapidity with which the critic's observations were written—he allowed himself barely twenty-four hours both to read and criticise,—it is matter of less astonishment that he should have fallen into some few misapprehensions, than that he should have been guilty of no more. To this I can make no other reply, than that his haste, being of his own choosing, was highly reprehensible. For, by his own confession, no one could be more thoroughly convinced than himself that the book ranked not among those which "he who runs may read." Besides, though originally

dashed off at a sitting, the "Observations" went not to the press without correction and careful revision.

However this may be, other proofs occur in the brochure of Digby, that he was more solicitous to exhibit his own quick discernment, than to be sure of the writer's meaning. And, as an example, I may adduce what he says on the subject of Ptolemy and the Koran. "I doubt he mistakes in his chronology," says he, "or *the printer in the name*, when he maketh Ptolemy condemn the Alcoran." This would no doubt tell well enough in the letter of one courtier to another, and succeed in provoking the intended smile. Anachronisms, when sufficiently striking, have always a comic effect, whether designedly perpetrated or not. Thus a dramatic poet of Athens introduces Hercules on the stage studying the "Almanache des Gourmands," of the age of Pericles, purposely, of course, to set the Demos "in a roar." But in the passage alluded to, of the "Religio Medici," Browne is speaking seriously; and if we laugh, it must be at him, not with him. Let us, however, look at his own words.

Setting forth very earnestly the excellence of the Bible, he observes "were it of man, I could not choose but say, it was the singularest and superlativest piece that hath been extant since the creation. Were I a pagan I should not forbear the lecture of it; and cannot but commend the judgment of Ptolemy, that thought not his library complete without it. The Alcoran of the Turks (I speak it

without prejudice) is an ill-composed piece, containing in it vain and ridiculous errors in philosophy, impossibilities, fictions, and vanities beyond laughter." There is here, the reader will perceive, no mistake in chronology, or error of the printer. Ptolemy's solicitude is confined to the Greek translation of the Scriptures; the critique on the Koran is Sir Thomas Browne's own.

Nevertheless, though I may have appeared somewhat forward to enter the lists in defence of the author of the "Religio Medici," it is not my design to deny that he is often vain, and sometimes in error. I have only striven to prove that, in the instances above mentioned, the charges are ill-founded. My notes will show how far I am from falling in with all he advances; and I must even, before entering on the work itself, hazard more than one remark anything but complimentary to its writer.

What the final purpose of Browne may have been, is more than I can pretend even to conjecture. Sometimes it appears to have been one thing, sometimes another. It would probably, even had he chosen to be candid, have been beyond his own power so to analyse the impelling motives as to determine exactly with which had been the initiative, and whether the primary impulse continued throughout to preserve the lead. And what he could not have determined I will not pretend to know; nor is it of paramount importance. The book is before us: what is its tendency? Whither does it lead? In my opinion, the sceptical portion is subordinate, and the piety predominates.

There are many errors, much that is mischievous; but there are still more truths, there is still more sound religion, and excellent philosophy.

The imperfections, therefore, of the "Religio Medici," should in no degree prejudice its popularity, and will not probably diminish its usefulness. For, who refuses to peruse a book because its author is sometimes egotistical, and occasionally mistaken? Every work composed by man is more or less in the same predicament. But of some writers the very errors are pregnant with instruction; since, if they teach us nothing else, this at least we may learn from them—that no amount of intellect, no force of genius, no care, no industry, is sufficient to insure, on all occasions, the attainment of truth; and that time, in its progress, reveals to the humble in talent, no less than in station, truths which once lay concealed from the wisest and proudest of philosophers.

Nay, to the vigorous and inquiring mind, it may be an advantage to converse with a body of propositions of which some are evil. "Prove *all things*—hold fast that which is good." The first of the suspicious brood with which we meet rouses our caution, puts us on our guard, calls into activity all our powers of discernment and discrimination. We are prepared to scrutinize narrowly and try the value of everything before we receive it. That indolent habit, which the feeding on mere literary luxuries engenders is for the moment, at least, cast aside; and a keen and searching spirit, without which to read is little better than to sleep, is substituted in its stead. Some-

thing of this is required, at all times, in studying our older literature, wherein "*la vertu, qu'on nom bienseance,*" (seldom the pervading spirit of any age,) is still less observable, perhaps, than in the productions of our own generation. The people for whom the "Religio Medici" was written were a plain race, and their language was plain. They spoke and wrote frankly of many things, which a greater progress in refinement, a more fastidious taste, and, perhaps, an instinctive desire to make up, by superior polish for what is wanting in vigour, have long since banished from the circles of popular speculation. In fact, an exact line had not then been drawn between the domains of literature and science; and physiology was consequently permitted to mingle itself up too intimately with considerations purely moral, the result of which was a vocabulary not sufficiently weeded.

Where, however, the error lies rather in the matter than in the style, the author, rather than the spirit of his age, should answer for it. And this is particularly the case with Sir Thomas Browne. His faults, in whatever form they might have manifested themselves, would still have constituted part and parcel of his character, and consequently have appeared in his works, had he lived in our own times. He would, for example, have been at once sceptical and superstitious; incredulous, where he should have believed; credulous, even to anility where disbelief would have been more commendable. He seems to have been complexionably inclined to strain at a gnat and swallow

a camel. He could, at one period of his life, doubt of the immortality of the soul, but nevertheless maintain the firmest possible faith in witchcraft; and not only so, but denounce as "atheists" all who called in question this important article of his philosophical creed. That is, it seemed incredible to him, upon the mere evidence of reason, (for as an article of faith he admitted it,) that the Creator of all things should give perpetuity of existence to rational intelligences called into being *ex nihilo*,—for such are our souls,—while his reason was fully able to digest the notion, that a number of poor old women in every parish—for so numerous in popular belief are witches—have the power to mount astride, through the atmosphere, upon a broomstick, and whisk their tails above the clouds!

To me, that declaration of his, that "religion contains not *impossibilities enough* for an active faith," which so marvellously contents Sir Kenelm Digby, appears to be conceived in anything but a spirit of piety. I make no account of Tertullian's "*credo quia impossibile est.*" In one of his temper and calibre it might be sheer absurdity. But for a writer so cool as Sir Thomas Browne, the same apology can scarcely be made; and, accordingly, I am surprised at the almost infantine simplicity—if I should not rather say, the hypocrisy—of Digby, who thus expresses his approval: "I am extremely pleased with him when he saith, 'there are not impossibilities enough in religion for an active faith.'"

Now, in what, to say the least of it, has all the

appearance of a sneer, I can discover nothing wherewith to be pleased; more particularly when I recollect that, among the principal grounds of his contempt for the Koran, he enumerates "the impossibilities" which, in his opinion, it contains. But, while I condemn this levity and petulance of language, which characterised his conversation no less than his writings, my charity forbids me to conclude any thing derogatory to his general belief; though it must be frankly acknowledged that expressions of this "amphibious nature," somewhat thickly scattered, are among the worst imperfections of the "Religio Medici."

With respect to the "impossibilities" themselves, it may be observed, that our eyes not being keen enough to discern the links which bind together the several parts of the universe, it might be as well if we abstained from deciding what can, and what cannot be. When Socrates was once asked his opinion of the celebrated poem of Empedocles, he replied, that he believed it to be an exceedingly fine work, since all he could understand of it appeared to be possessed of great beauty. What this Athenian said ironically, we may without irony affirm of the great poem of the universe: all we comprehend of it is beautiful, and there can be little doubt that what exceeds our comprehension in it is no less so. Metaphysicians inclined to universal scepticism, finding that in the vast regions of philosophy we can, to adopt a homely phrase, scarcely see beyond our noses, have dwelt with something like exultation on the incapacity

of man's intellect to overcome the difficulties which surround the most indubitable truths. For example, all the world admit, as a philosophical axiom, that matter may be divided *ad infinitum;* since, whatever has dimensions and solidity may be separated into parts, those parts, again, into others, and so on for ever. Nothing seems clearer, or more demonstrable than this. And yet the reader, no doubt, knows well that it may be no less clearly shown to be impossible. For, to pass over a particle of matter, however small, will require an instant of time; and if matter be divisible *ad infinitum,* which has been admitted, any given mass, say a cubic foot, must necessarily contain an infinity of atoms. Now, as some time, however short, is certainly necessary to pass over each of these, the number of moments requisite to take us over the whole must be infinite—that is, an eternity. But, from experience we know, that to traverse such surface is not the work of a second; therefore the number of atoms it contains must be limited, therefore matter is not divisible *ad infinitum.* We have here, of course, a mere *jeu d'esprit;* but it nevertheless exhibits very correctly the limits, in that direction, of the human understanding.

But if physics thus contain depths unfathomable, is it not reasonable to expect, in the obscure regions of ontology, in that science which is conversant with God and spiritual existences, that we shall be stopped, almost at every step, by phenomena beyond our comprehension? It is childish to babble of the "impossibilities of religion," until

we understand the whole scheme of the world, intellectual and physical—until we can explain who we are, whence we are, and wherefore we are. Until we know what laws govern the elements, mould them into sentient forms, and again, after a season, dissolve those warm and beautiful structures, and give their dust to the winds. Until we can decide the nature of that mysterious principle which we term *life;* discover how in some things it becomes a fountain of motion, in others of motion and passion, in others of motion, passion, intellectuality, and all those marvellous phenomena which we observe in ourselves and others. Until we can say in what consists the invisible chain we denominate *affection,* that binds us not to the living only, but to the dead, to forms long passed away, to minds translated beyond the stars, and the utmost bourne of the visible creation. Until then, let us be humble, nor mutter, even in the secrecy of our hearts, that there is any contradiction, any basis for scepticism, any impossibility in religion.

It will, perhaps, be sufficient thus to have glanced at the more serious faults of Sir Thomas Browne. To dwell further on them might seem to be uncharitable. He would appear, at the period of writing the "Religio Medici," to have been passing through those clouds of doubt and uncertainty which beset most speculative men at one period or another of their career; and he employed himself for his own sole use, as he tells us, in carefully noting down all the difficulties and dangers his faith had to encounter. The history of his expe-

rience, however, if properly considered, cannot fail to prove useful to others: since one chief purpose of books is to serve as beacons, by the light of which we may discover the rocks and shoals of study, and learn to steer wide of them in our own way into port.

Another defect of the "Religio Medici," and, indeed, of Sir Thomas Browne's works generally, brings them within the scope of Lord Bacon's censure, where, investigating the causes why literature is sometimes neglected, he says, "Like as many substances in nature, which are solid and entire, do many times putrefy and corrupt into worms; so good and sound knowledge doth often corrupt and dissolve into a number of subtle, idle, unwholesome, and (as I may term them) vermiculate questions, which seem indeed to have a kind of motion and quickness in them, and yet are unsound and hollow, and of no solid use."([6])

In fact, simply to be knowing is not the object of a philosopher; but to be learned in precisely those things the knowledge of which must improve and elevate his character as a citizen and as a man. And such was the aim that regulated the studies of Sir Thomas More. He investigated the science of morals, because without morals private happiness is unattainable; he studied the science of politics, because without the knowledge of politics there can be no public happiness. By similar views were the researches of Milton, Sidney, and

([6]) Advancement of Learning, I. 4. §. 3.

Locke directed; and the result was a powerful sympathy for mankind at large, correct feelings, and personal contentment.

Browne, on the contrary, though he professes to have made numerous inquiries respecting the form and spirit of various foreign polities, never prosecuted with the ardour of preference the study of ethics or of government. Neither, so far as I can discover, did he much busy his imagination with the plastic and mimetic arts, with the laws which regulate the beauty of form, and convert a piece of marble or canvass into a kind of secular idol; or even pursue those still nobler and lovelier modifications of beauty which meet our eye in the domains of poetry and eloquence. No, for such things he appears to have experienced no love. His preferences led him into a quite contrary direction—to the discussion of questions curious enough in themselves, and not without a certain interest, but barren as the sand on the beach. For example, it is a point with him to ascertain whether Judas was hanged, or only broke his neck; whether Eve was fashioned from Adam's right or left side; whether, in fact, there be such a thing, in nature, as right or left; (an inquiry which probably suggested Sterne's ingenious speculation respecting the right end of a woman;) whether the world was created in summer, winter, or spring; whether Adam was not, *Hibernicè*, about thirty when first called into existence; and whether, seeing he could never have had any use for one, our great first parent was furnished with a navel.

One question, very nearly akin to these, he unfortunately missed; viz. "whether the bird was before the egg, or the egg before the bird," the discussion of which might have furnished both him and his readers with several pages of entertainment. It must be owned it is no great matter which side one takes on such important questions. Nor is it much more material to discover, whether those apparitions which, he says, appear about cemeteries, be devils, as he decides, or simply ghosts, as Digby, and knowing people in general, believe. It is clear, however, as Addison gravely observes on the subject of witchcraft, that "much may be said on both sides." Sir Thomas argues the matter, as devil's advocate, with much ingenuity. "I believe that the souls of men know neither contrary nor corruption; that they subsist beyond the body, and outlive death by the privilege of their own proper natures, and without a miracle;" (in which belief he is quite orthodox.) "That the souls of the faithful, as they leave earth, take possession of heaven; that those apparitions and ghosts of departed persons are not the wandering souls of men, but the unquiet walks of devils, prompting and suggesting us unto mischief, blood, and villany; instilling, and stealing into our hearts, that the blessed spirits are not *at rest in their graves*," (a curious article of faith!) "but wander, solicitous of the affairs of the world; but that those phantoms appear often, and do frequent cemeteries, charnel-houses, and churches, it is because those are the dormitories of the dead, where the

devil, like an insolent champion, beholds with pride the spoils and trophies of his victory over Adam." (7)

Now, in this, Digby by no means concurs. He is staunch for the ghosts. ' Souls," he gravely observes, " that go out of their bodies with affection to those objects they leave behind them, (which usually is as long as they can relish them,) do retain still, even in their separation, a bias and a languishing towards them; which is *the reason* why such terrene souls appear *oftenest* in cemeteries and charnel-houses, and not that *moral one* which our author giveth. For life, which is union with the body, being that which carnal souls have straitest affection to, and that they are loathest to be separated from; their unquiet spirit, which can never naturally lose the impressions it had wrought in it at the time of its driving out, lingereth perpetually after that dear consort of his. The impossibility cannot cure them of their impotent desires; they would fain be alive again,

' —— Iterumque ad tarda reverti
Corpoia. Quæ lucis miseris tam dira cupido!' " (8)

Tyrant or not, Dionysius was right, if it was of such disquisitions he said, " *sunt ista verba senum otiosorum.*" But Lord Bacon, who in this agreed with him, appears to have made the quotation from imperfect recollection.(9) The real words of the Syracusan, uttered in resentment of Plato's defence

(7) Religio Medici, p. 73, 74.
(8) Virg. Æneid, VI. 720. f.
(9) Advancement of Learning, I. iv. §. 3.

of freedom, were, *οἱ λόγοι σοῦ γεροντιῶσι*, though it is not often that old men are so enthusiastic on such a subject. However, the philosopher had him on the hip:—*σοῦ ἐέ γε τυραννιῶσι*, replied he; and the taunt of old age on the one side, and of tyranny on the other, put an end to an acquaintance which ought never to have been formed.([10])

To return: discussions like the above may occupy agreeably enough an idle scholar, musing in his easy-chair, but can very little profit the philosopher, or the man of the world. Fortunately, however, they rather constitute the garnishing than the subject of Browne's speculations. He vends, as I have shown, much better wares, when in his serious moods; and, in consideration of these, the others may be tolerated. Still, a principal characteristic of the "Religio Medici" is the singular knot of idiosyncrasies it exhibits, of which the principal undoubtedly is the evident longing of its author to be removed, both in belief and practice, as far as possible from the common people:

"Farthest from thee is best."

He delighted to contemplate the gulf which divided him from the crowd. "The advantage I have of the vulgar, with the contentment and happiness I conceive therein, is an ample recompense for all my endeavours, in what part of knowledge soever."([11]) And who knows how great is the

([10]) Diog. Laert. III. p. 74, edit. Menag.

([11]) Religio Medici, p. 23.

number of those that would not thus confess it, who find the principal reward of study in this? Many is the feverish egotist who will predicate of himself that

"His soul is like a star, and dwells apart."

Though there be often much more than Browne imagined of common-place sentiment in this shrinking from other men. Disguise it how we may, it proceeds more from a fear that, in their society, we shall not appear "fellows of mark and likelihood," than from any genuine consciousness of superiority. He apparently found that men encroached too much upon his consequence, that their prejudices or their logic proved too tough to be subdued, and took to flight, because he could not conquer.

This, however, was as if, in his own profession, a man were to fly from all diseases that would not immediately yield to his remedies. But the great physician knows no discouragement. Defeated to-day, he to-morrow returns again to the trial, contests the ground inch by inch with Death, nor yields, nor abates a jot of heart or hope till the "pale flag" of the adversary be advanced upon the ramparts. And so is it with the moral physician. He will not hide himself from those whom he attempts to benefit. He will pursue humanity into its worst recesses, and feel its pulse under the most loathsome rags of ignorance and misfortune. Like the Hindoo god, Brahma, he might start, perhaps, and be troubled, could he

find himself alone in the world; but will never quake or tremble where there is man. Nor does he reserve his benefits for the good alone. His bounty knows no limits but his power. And in this he humbly imitates the Creator, who "causeth his sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Thus, too, he may in part, perhaps, fulfil the Christian precept of loving those who hate us —for among the crowd there possibly are some who hold him in aversion. But he does not love them for their love, that were an every-day matter; he loves them because they belong to our common nature—because they are men. And he will still love them, though they may, in their ignorance, repay him with ingratitude.

Mr. Wingrove Cooke, in his History of Parties, appears to think he is complimenting Burke, when he says that he hated the people; but what worse, or, indeed, what else, could he have said, had he been composing the panegyric of Satan? Burke no doubt, at a certain point of his career, deserted the people's cause, and despised many of the qualities with which ignorance invests the populace, whom, in consequence, he denominated "the swinish multitude;" but I cannot, for all that, believe anything so ill of him, as that he hated the people, though the Examiner may be too charitable, (which is a generous error,) when it supposes him rather to have erred through "too much love."

Nor can I believe, even on his own testimony,

that Sir Thomas Browne "contemned and laughed at" that vast majority of mankind whom he denominates "the multitude." It was a piece of sheer affectation, or he misunderstood himself. Otherwise, he was inferior, in whatever is noble and generous, to that very multitude: for the multitude, or, which is all one, the people, never hate. And hence, perhaps, arose the saying, that "the voice of the people is the voice of God." It has no hatred in it. Angry it may be, or changeful, or wild, or impetuous; it may terrify by its loudness, like the hurricane; it may bring scorn upon the proud, and death to the glory-seeker, but without a touch of malice. Placable, too, and full of forgiveness are the people. Nay, among their faults are their patience, their endurance of wrong, their too great and indiscriminate clemency. For, did ever popular favourite, fallen, whether justly, or unjustly, into disgrace, sue vainly to this "many-headed monster" for forgiveness? Did any man, in any age or country, ever confer openly a favour on the people, for which they did not first or last reward him with all they have to give—glory and an immortal name? Look over the whole earth at the monuments of human gratitude, which, in many countries has plunged them into idolatry, and bent their knee in worship of their fellow-creatures.—It is not the people who are ungrateful, but their benefactors who are insatiable. They would become tyrants because they have performed some signal service for their countrymen: that is, degrade whom they have benefited into slaves.

But I have said that Browne misunderstood himself, and it will be easy to prove it. In that part of his work wherein he investigates the nature of benevolence, he observes, " I hold not so narrow a conceit of this virtue, as to conceive that to give alms is only to be charitable, or think a piece of liberality can comprehend the total of charity. Divinity hath wisely divided the acts thereof into many branches, and hath taught us, in this narrow way, many paths unto goodness: as many ways as we may do good, so many ways we may be charitable. There are infirmities not only of body but of soul and fortunes, which do require the merciful hand of our abilities. *I cannot contemn a man for ignorance, but behold him with as much pity as I do Lazarus.* It is no greater charity to clothe his body, than apparel the nakedness of his soul."([12])

In this language, which evidently comes warm from the heart, I can discover nothing of that contempt which exults over the ignorance of the majority, a matter purely accidental, and therefore not to be imputed to them for a fault. A man's lameness, blindness, poverty, sickness, childlessness, are as proper subjects for laughter and ridicule as his involuntary ignorance. Accordingly, no philosopher and *à fortiori*, no Christian, ever despised or poured scorn on the multitude for the mental hunger they endure. If they are starving, he will, if it be in his power, give them bread, and if ignorant, know-

([12]) Religio Medici. pt. II. p. 116.

ledge. Did Christ contemn or laugh at the people? Did HE *hate* them when his heart's-blood was on their spear's point? No, his compassion for their ignorance still overmastered every other feeling, and he prayed, "Father, forgive them, *for they know not what they do!*" Philosophy therefore, if it require a lesson in humanity, may come to school here. The feeling which prompted those words touched the highest culminating point of human nature, where divinity itself began.

And Browne had been in this school, and notwithstanding his affectation, profited greatly. He could not "contemn a man for his ignorance;" and if he could not contemn one, so neither could he ten thousand. The number is nothing. Here, as in many other things, *c'est le premier pas qui coûte.* The "multitude" resolves itself into units, and those units are men. If we contemn the whole, therefore, we must contemn each; with that which we contemn we can have no sympathy; and without sympathy we can make no effort to relieve. But our physician overflowed with compassion and benevolence. "Aristotle," he remarks, "is too severe, that will not allow us to be truly liberal without wealth, and the bountiful hand of fortune;" (he misunderstood Aristotle, but that is nothing;) "if this be true, I must confess I am charitable *only* in my liberal intentions, and bountiful well-wishes." Nay, not in wishes *only:* his charities bore fruit as well as blossoms—they ripened from wishes into acts. For thus he proceeds: "But if the example of the

mite be not only an act of wonder, but an example of the noblest charity, surely poor men may also build hospitals, and the rich alone have not erected cathedrals." And then he makes the transition to himself. "I have a private method which others observe not; I take the opportunity of myself to do good: I borrow occasion of charity from mine own necessities, and supply the wants of others, when I am in most need myself; for it is an honest stratagem to make advantage of ourselves, and so to husband the acts of virtue, that where they were defective in one circumstance, they may repay their want, and multiply their goodness in another."

Still the best passage on this subject is to come; "He is rich who hath enough to be charitable; and it is hard to be so poor, that a noble mind may not find a way to this piece of goodness. 'He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord:' there is more rhetoric in that one sentence than in a library of sermons; and indeed if those sentences were understood by the reader, with the same emphasis as they are delivered by the author, we needed not those volumes of instructions, but might be honest by an epitome. Upon this motive only I cannot behold a beggar without relieving his necessities with my purse, or his soul with my prayers: these scenical and accidental differences between us, cannot make me forget that common and untouched part of us both; there is under these *cantos* and miserable outsides, these mutilate and semi-bodies, a soul of the same alloy with our own, whose ge-

nealogy is God's, as well as ours, and is in as fair a way to salvation as ourselves."([12])

From what has been said above it will, I think, be very clear that, taken altogether, the "Religio Medici" is far from being a common work. By an historian of English literature it would, no doubt, be viewed in conjunction with the other literary productions of the period, as receiving or reflecting light on them. He might probably inquire to what extent Browne was indebted to his predecessors or contemporaries, and how far his example may have influenced succeeding authors. Both these inquiries are foreign to my present purpose. I have preferred considering it as a solitary monument, as a means of penetrating into the singular character of the writer. My object has been to render the reader better acquainted with Sir Thomas Browne, and, consequently, in my opinion, better pleased with his mind and character. There no doubt exist several obstacles. He addresses himself less to the understanding than to the fancy—to the passions still less than to either. There are few attempts at severe logic. He tells us what he believed, what he disbelieved, what he doubted. He speculates on dogmas, on crotchets, or conceits, but disturbs no principle of action. On our duties as citizens he seldom touches. His meditations have very much the character of ghost-stories—they are wild, dark, often sepulchral: they carry us beyond the circle of our ordinary associations—they interest, they

([12]) Religio Medici. part. II. p. 145.

excite, they perplex us—but in the end send us back with a stronger relish than ever for our more secular studies. They are, in short, admirable things to interpose between the rough and angular forms of worldly pursuits, to damp a little the too ardent and vehement assertion of political principles, and rights simply mundane.

J. A. ST. JOHN.

Hampstead, May, 1838.

ERRATA.

Page xvii, Note,	*for* 173	*read* 142. f.
—— 235, line 10 of Note,	— Symmactrum	—— Symmachum.
—— 240, —— 1,	— uto	—— unto.
—— 241, Note 127,	— dimentia	—— dementia.
—— —— —— 128,	— deincepsi	—— deinceps.
—— 254, line 7,	— Methesulah	—— Methuselah.

RELIGIO MEDICI:

WITH

OBSERVATIONS BY SIR KENELM DIGBY.

A LETTER

FROM

SIR THOMAS BROWNE TO SIR KENELM DIGBY.

HONOURED SIR,

GIVE your servant, who hath ever honoured you, leave to take notice of a book at present in the press, entitled (as I am informed) "Animadversions upon a Treatise, lately printed, under the name of 'Religio Medici.'" Hereof, I am advertised, you have descended to be the author. Worthy sir, permit your servant to affirm there is contained therein nothing that can deserve the reason of your contradictions, much less the candour of your "Animadversions." And to certify the truth thereof, that book (whereof I do acknowledge myself the author) was penned many years past, and (what cannot escape your apprehension) with no intention for the press, or the least desire to oblige the faith of any man to its assertions. But what hath more especially emboldened my pen unto you at present is, that the same piece, contrived in my private study, and as an exercise unto myself, rather than an exercitation for any other, having passed from my hand under a broken and imperfect copy, by frequent transcription it still run forward into corruption, and after the addition of some things, omission of others, and transposition of many, without my assent or privacy, the liberty of these times committed it unto the press; whence it issued so disguised, the author, without distinction, could not acknowledge it. Having thus miscarried, within a few weeks I shall, God willing, deliver unto the press the true and intended original (whereof, in the mean time your worthy self may command a view;) otherwise, whenever that copy shall be extant, it will most clearly appear how far the text hath been mistaken, and all observations, glosses,

and exercitations thereon, will in a great part impugn the printer or transcriber, rather than the author. If, after that, you shall esteem it worth your vacant hours to discourse thereon, you shall but take that liberty which I assume myself, that is, freely to abound in your sense as I have done in my own. However you shall determine, you shall sufficiently honour me in the vouchsafe of your refute, and I oblige the whole world in the occasion of your pen.

Your Servant,

T. B.

Norwich, March 3, 1642.

REPLY,

BY

SIR KENELM DIGBY.

Worthy Sir,

Speedily upon the receipt of your letter of the third current, I sent to find out the printer that Mr. Crook (who delivered me yours) told me was printing something under my name, concerning your treatise of "Religio Medici," and to forbid him any further proceeding therein; but my servant could not meet with him; whereupon I have left with Mr. Crook a note to that purpose, entreating him to deliver it to the printer. I verily believe there is some mistake in the information given you, and that what is printing must be from some other pen than mine; for such reflections as I made upon your learned and ingenious discourse are so far from meriting the press, as they can tempt nobody to a serious reading of them. They were notes hastily set down, as I suddenly ran over your excellent piece, which is of so weighty subject, and so strongly penned, as requireth much time, and sharp attention but to comprehend it; whereas, what I wrote was the employment but of one sitting; and there were not twenty-four hours between my receiving my Lord of Dorset's letter that occasioned what I said, and the finishing my answer to him; and yet part of that time was taken up in procuring your book, which he desired me to read and give him an account of, for till then I was so unhappy as never to have heard of that worthy discourse. If that letter ever come to your view (1) you will see the high value I set upon your great parts: and if it should be thought I have been something too bold in differing from your sense, I hope I shall

(1) See the end of "Religio Medici."

easily obtain pardon, when it shall be considered that his lordship assigned it me as an exercitation, to oppose in it, for entertainment, such passages as I might judge capable thereof; wherein what liberty I took is to be attributed to the security of a private letter, and to my not knowing (nor my lord's) the person whom it concerned.

But, sir, now that I am so happy as to have that knowledge, I dare assure you that nothing shall ever issue from me but savouring of all honour, esteem, and reverence both to yourself, and that worthy production of yours. If I had the vanity to give myself reputation by entering the lists in public with so eminent and learned a man as you are, yet I know right well I am no ways able to do it; it would be a very unequal progress. I pretend not to learning; those slender notions I have are but disjointed pieces I have by chance gleaned up here and there. To encounter such a sinewy opposite, or make animadversions upon so smart a piece as yours is, requireth such a solid stock and exercise in school-learning. My superficial besprinkling will serve only for a private letter, or a familiar discourse with lady-auditors. With longing I expect the coming abroad of the true copy of that book, whose false and stolen one hath already given me so much delight. And so, assuring you I shall deem it a great good fortune to deserve your favour and friendship, I kiss your hand, and rest,

Your most humble Servant,

KENELM DIGBY.

Winchester House, March 20, 1642.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

TO THE READER.

CERTAINLY that man were greedy of life, who should desire to live when all the world were at an end; and he must needs be very impatient, who would repine at death in the society of all things that suffer under it. Had not almost every man suffered by the press, or were not the tyranny thereof become universal, I had not wanted reason for complaint: but in times wherein I have lived to behold the highest perversion of that excellent invention, the name of his majesty defamed, the honour of parliament depraved, the writings of both depravedly, anticipatively, counterfeitly imprinted; complaints may seem ridiculous in private persons; and men of my condition may be as incapable of affronts, as hopeless of their reparations. And truly had not the duty I owe unto the importunity of friends, and the allegiance I must ever acknowledge unto truth, prevailed with me, the inactivity of my disposition might have made these sufferings continual, and time, that brings other things to light, should have satisfied me in the remedy of its oblivion. But because things evidently false are not only printed, but many things of truth most falsely set forth, in this latter I could not but think myself engaged. For though we have no power to redress the former, yet in the other, reparation being within ourselves, I have at present represented unto the world a full and intended copy of that piece, which was most imperfectly and surreptitiously published before.

This I confess, about seven years past, with some others of affinity thereto, for my private exercise and satisfaction I had at leisurable hours composed; which being communicated unto one, it became common unto many, and was by transcription successively corrupted, until it arrived in a most depraved copy at the press. He that shall peruse that work, and shall take notice of sundry particulars and personal expressions therein, will easily discern the intention was not public: and being a private exercise directed to myself, what is delivered therein, was rather a memorial unto me, than an example or rule unto any other: and therefore if there be any singularity therein correspondent unto the private conceptions of any man, it doth not advantage them: or if dissentaneous thereunto, it no way overthrows them. It was penned in such a place, and with such disadvantage, that (I protest) from the first setting of pen unto paper, I had not the assistance of any good book, whereby to promote my invention, or relieve my memory, and therefore there might be many real lapses therein, which others might take notice of, and more than I suspected myself. It was set down many years past, and was the sense of my conception at that time, not an immutable law unto my advancing judgment at all times; and therefore there might be many things therein plausible unto my passed apprehension, which are not agreeable unto my present self. There are many things delivered rhetorically, many expressions therein merely tropical, and as they best illustrate my intention, and therefore also there are many things to be taken in a soft and flexible sense, and not to be called unto the rigid test of reason. Lastly, all that is contained therein, is in submission unto maturer discernments; and as I have declared, shall no further father them than the best and learned judgments shall authorise them; under favour of which considerations I have made its secrecy public, and committed the truth there to every ingenuous reader.

THOMAS BROWNE.

RELIGIO MEDICI.

PART I.

For my religion, though there be several circumstances that might persuade the world I have none at all, as the general scandal of my profession,(1) the natural course of my studies, the indifferency of my behaviour and discourse in matters of religion, —neither violently defending one, nor with that common ardour and contention opposing another,—

(1) The author of certain "Annotations" on the Religio Medici, attributes the common opinion, that physicians have no religion, to the "unlearned sort." But it was not among the unlearned, I imagine, that the notion first took its rise. Men's creeds are almost invariably affected by the nature of their studies; and these, again, must be referred to the original bent of the mind. Imaginative men, that is, persons in whom the higher attributes of genius are found, seldom delight in the sciences conversant with mere matter or form; least of all in medicine, the object of which is the derangement, or imperfection of nature, and the endeavour to substitute order and harmony, in the place of their opposites. Brought thus chiefly into contact with diseased organization, surrounded by the worst elements of civil society, (for their experience must in general lie among the intemperate and vicious,) they may be said to exist in an infected moral atmosphere, and it is therefore not greatly to be wondered at that among such persons a highly religious frame of mind should be the exception, and not the rule.—Ed.

yet in despite hereof, I dare, without usurpation, assume the honourable style of a Christian. Not that I merely owe this title to the font, my education, or clime wherein I was born, as being bred up either to confirm those principles my parents instilled into my understanding, or by a general consent proceed in the religion of my country: but having in my riper years and confirmed judgment, seen and examined all, I find myself obliged, by the principles of grace, and the law of mine own reason, to embrace no other name but this: neither doth herein my zeal so far make me forget the general charity I owe unto humanity, as rather to hate than pity Turks and infidels, and (what is worse) Jews;([2]) rather contenting myself to enjoy

([2]) This is the charitable spirit which breathes through Pope's Universal Prayer; and it was, perhaps, inspired in both writers by the secret consciousness that, in the matter of belief, they very much needed the tolerance they exercised towards others. On this subject Locke's Third Letter on Toleration (Works, fol. vol. II. pp. 295—470.) may be studied with great advantage. Respecting the species of persecution put in practice by the various Christian sects, against each other, the philosopher entertained exceedingly just notions, and animadverts severely on those "who narrow Christianity within bounds of their own making, and which the gospel knows nothing of; and often, for things by themselves confessed indifferent, thrust men out of their communion, and then punish them for not being of it." p. 337. In the same spirit wrote Jeremy Taylor, (Liberty of Prophesying. §. 21. p. 371.) "As for particular churches, they are bound to allow communion to all those that profess the same faith upon which the apostles did give communion; for whatsoever preserves us as members of the church, gives us title to the communion of saints; and whatsoever faith or belief that is to which God hath promised heaven, that faith makes us members of the Catholic church." Conf. Montaigne, Essais, liv. I.

that happy style, than maligning those who refuse so glorious a title.

But because the name of a Christian is become too general to express our faith, there being a geography of religion as well as lands, and every clime distinguished not only by their laws and limits, but circumscribed by their doctrines and rules of faith; to be particular, I am of that reformed new-cast religion, wherein I dislike nothing but the name;(3) of the same belief our Saviour taught, the apostles disseminated, the fathers authorized, and martyrs confirmed; but by the sinister ends of princes,(4) the ambition and avarice of prelates,

---

chap. 56. *passim*, which I the more particularly refer to, as many of Sir Thomas Browne's fantasies were transplanted from Montaigne's nursery-grounds.—Ed.

(3) That is, instead of being called a Calvinist, a Lutheran, a Protestant, &c., he would have preferred being called a Christian; in which I agree with him.—Ed.

(4) The author here touches upon a point that has never been thoroughly investigated. I mean, the "religion of kings," which I have long designed to treat in a separate volume. Bayle, who admired the present work of Sir Thomas Browne, remarks, however, that "ce seroit, je crois, un livre, de bon débit, que celui de la Religion du Souverain: *il feroit oublier* celui de la Religion du Medecin." (Dict. Hist. et Crit. art. Agesilaus, rem. H.) The conduct of the emperor Charles V. furnishes a striking commentary on the text of Browne. Many authors, with apparent justice, maintain, that, much as he pretended to feel for the interests of religion, he willingly abandoned the Christian cities of Belgrade and Rhodes to the Turks, in order to gratify his own personal ambition in the contest with France. Again, while affecting to regard Lutheranism as a heresy, he is said to have connived at its diffusion, since he could profit by the divisions it occasioned, sometimes playing it off against the pope, sometimes against France, and not

and the fatal corruption of times, so decayed, impaired, and fallen from its native beauty, that it required the careful and charitable hands of these times to restore it to its primitive integrity. Now the accidental occasion wherupon, the slender means whereby, the low and abject condition of the person by whom so good a work was set on foot, which in our adversaries beget contempt and scorn, fills me with wonder, and is the very same objection the insolent pagans first cast at Christ and his disciples.

Yet have I not so shaken hands with those desperate resolutions, who had rather venture at large their decayed bottom, than bring her in to be new trimmed in the dock; who had rather promiscuously retain all, than abridge any, and obstinately be what they are, than what they have been, as to stand in diameter and sword's point with them: we have reformed from them, not against them; for omitting those improperations, and terms of scurrility betwixt us, which only difference our affections, and not our cause, there is between us one common name and appellation, one faith and ne-

seldom against Germany itself. With regard to the conduct of the *prelates* which Sir Thomas here condemns, I must refer the reader to Milton's treatise on "Reformation in England," where he will find it faithfully described. Having remarked the paltry motives and involuntary part played by Henry VIII. in promoting the cause of Protestantism, he says,—"The next default was in the bishops, who, though they had renounced the pope, still hugged the popedom, and shared the authority among themselves, by their six bloody articles, persecuting the Protestants no slacker than the pope would have done."—Ed.

cessary body of principles common to us both; and therefore I am not scrupulous to converse and live with them, to enter their churches in defect of ours, and either pray with them, or for them.([5]) I could never perceive any rational consequence from those many texts which prohibit the children of Israel to pollute themselves with the temples of the heathens; we being all Christians, and not divided by such detested impieties as might profane our prayers, or the place wherein we make them; or that a resolved conscience may not adore her Creator anywhere, especially in places devoted to his service; where if their devotions offend him, mine may please him; if theirs profane it, mine may hallow it. Holy-water and crucifix (dangerous to the common people) deceive not my judgment, nor abuse my devotion at all. ([6])

([5]) I admire this feeling, and have always, when in Roman Catholic countries, endeavoured to be guided by it. To pray in conjunction with a Romish priest, has never appeared culpable to me; nor have I refused to cross myself, or to dip my finger, on entering their churches, in the basin of holy-water, fixed for the purpose near the door. I have even joined Mohammedans in their devotions; that is, while they knelt to pray, I have silently sent up my own orisons in their assembly. This, however, could not so well be done in a Hindoo or Ghebre temple, where the object worshipped is other than the true God. —Ed.

([6]) Perhaps, however, it may be found impossible so to purge the ceremonial of any church that no baits or allurements to superstition shall remain. Even in our inward conception there is an infusion of superstition. Finding it beyond our reach to conceive a spirit without form or dimensions, we often represent the Deity, to our thoughts, in the shape of a man; which, even while doing so, we know to be highly absurd.—Ed.

I am, I confess, naturally inclined to that which misguided zeal terms superstition: my common conversation I do acknowledge austere, my behaviour full of rigour, sometimes not without morosity; yet at my devotion I love to use the civility of my knee, my hat, and hand, with all those outward and sensible motions which may express or promote my invisible devotion.(7) I should violate my own arm rather than a church, nor willingly deface the name of saint or martyr. At the sight of a cross or crucifix I can dispense with my hat, but scarce with the thought or memory of my Saviour: I cannot laugh at, but rather pity the fruitless journeys of pilgrims, or contemn the miserable condition of friars; for though misplaced in circumstances, there is some-

(7) For my own part I no more think it necessary that all men should observe a strict conformity, on minor points, in the matter of religion, than that they should seek to resemble each other in features. Agreed on fundamentals, we may very innocently, I think, follow our own bent in the rest; if it were not so He would have told us. In our Father's house are many mansions; and in his Church on earth there are many varieties of belief and practice, but like the radii of a circle, all, perhaps, tending to one centre, which is Christ. I am the more confirmed in this opinion by finding that I hold it in common with Jeremy Taylor, who, describing the useless attempts which had been made to reconcile all religious differences among mankind, observes—"Few in the meantime considered, that so long as men had such variety of principles, such several constitutions, educations, tempers, and distempers, hopes, interests, and weaknesses, degrees of light, and degrees of understanding, it was impossible all should be of one mind. And what is impossible to be done, it is not necessary it should be done."—*Liberty of Prophesying*, p. 2.—Ed.

thing in it of devotion. I could never hear the Ave Maria bell([8]) without an elevation, or think it a sufficient warrant, because they erred in one circumstance, for me to err in all, that is, in silence and dumb contempt; whilst therefore they direct their devotions to her, I offer mine to God, and rectify the errors of their prayers, by rightly ordering mine own. At a solemn procession I have wept abundantly, while my consorts, blind with opposition and prejudice, have fallen into an excess of scorn and laughter. There are, questionless, both in Greek, Roman, and African churches, solemnities and ceremonies, whereof the wiser zeals do make a Christian use, and stand condemned by us, not as evil in themselves, but as allurements and baits of superstition to those vulgar heads that look asquint on the face of truth, and those unstable judgments that cannot resist in the narrow point and centre of virtue without a reel or stagger to the circumference.

As there were many reformers, so likewise many reformations; every country proceeding in a particular way and method, according as their national interest, together with their constitution and clime inclined them; some angrily, and with extremity; others calmly, and with mediocrity, not rending, but easily dividing the community, and

([8]) A church bell that tolls every day at six and twelve of the clock; at the hearing whereof every one in what place soever, either of house or street, betakes himself to his prayer, which is commonly directed to the virgin.

leaving an honest possibility of a reconciliation; which, though peaceable spirits do desire, and may conceive that revolution of time and the mercies of God may effect, yet that judgment that shall consider the present antipathies between the two extremes, their contrarieties in condition, affection, and opinion, may with the same hopes expect an union in the poles of heaven.

But to difference myself nearer, and draw into a lesser circle: there is no church, whose every part so squares unto my conscience; whose articles, constitutions, and customs seem so consonant unto reason, and as it were framed to my particular devotion, as this whereof I hold my belief, the Church of England, to whose faith I am a sworn subject; and therefore in a double obligation subscribe unto her articles, and endeavour to observe her constitutions; whatsoever is beyond, as points indifferent, I observe according to the rules of my private reason, or the humour and fashion of my devotion; neither believing this, because Luther affirmed it, nor disapproving that, because Calvin hath disavouched it. I condemn not all things in the council of Trent, nor approve all in the synod of Dort. In brief, where the Scripture is silent, the church is my text; where that speaks, it is but my comment: where there is a joint silence of both, I borrow not the rules of my religion from Rome or Geneva, but the dictates of my own reason. It is an unjust scandal of our adversaries, and a gross error in ourselves, to compute the nativity of our religion from Henry the Eighth, who

though he rejected the pope, (9) refused not the faith of Rome, and effected no more than what his own predecessors desired and essayed in ages past, and was conceived the state of Venice would have attempted in our days. (10) It is as uncharitable a point in us to fall upon those popular scurrilities and opprobrious scoffs of the bishop of Rome, to whom, as temporal prince, we owe the duty of good language. I confess there is a cause of passion between us; by his sentence I stand excommunicated; heretic is the best language he affords me; yet can no ear witness, I ever returned him the name of antichrist, man of sin, or whore of Babylon. (11) It is the method of charity to suffer without reaction: those usual satires and invectives of the pulpit may perchance produce a good effect on the vulgar, whose ears are opener to

(9) So much Buchanan, in his own life written by himself, testifieth, who speaking of his coming into England about the latter end of the king's time, saith, "Sed ibi tum omnia adeo erant incerta, ut eodem die, ac eodem igne (very strange) utriusque factionis homines cremarentur, Henrico VIII. jam seniore suæ magis securitati quam religionis puritati intento." And for a confirmation of this assertion of the author, vide. Stat. 31. H. VIII. cap. 14. ANON. ANNOT.

(10) This expectation was in the time of Pope Paul V., who, by excommunicating that republic, gave occasion to the senate to banish all such of the clergy as would not, by reason of the pope's command, administer the sacrament, and upon that account the Jesuits were cast out, and never since received into that state. ANON. ANNOT.

(11) An example of forbearance worthy of imitation. Our Saviour, though he describes the Pharisees in strong terms, never meets reviling with reviling: "He was smitten, yet opened he not his mouth."—ED.

rhetoric than logic; yet do they in no wise confirm the faith of wiser believers, who know that a good cause needs not to be pardoned by passion, but can sustain itself upon a temperate dispute.

I could never divide myself from any man upon the difference of an opinion, or be angry with his judgment for not agreeing with me in that, from which within a few days I should dissent myself. I have no genius to disputes in religion, and have often thought it wisdom to decline them, especially upon a disadvantage, or when the cause of truth might suffer in the weakness of my patronage. Where we desire to be informed, it is good to contest with men above ourselves; but to confirm and establish our opinions, it is best to argue with judgments below our own, that the frequent spoils and victories over their reasons, may settle in ourselves an esteem and confirmed opinion of our own.[12] Every man is not a proper champion for truth, nor fit to take up the gauntlet in the cause of verity. Many from the ignorance of these maxims, and an inconsiderate zeal unto truth, have too rashly charged the troops of error, and remain as trophies

---

[12] This was the rule adopted by the Sophists, who delighted to make long speeches before ignorant and vulgar audiences, who could neither confute nor perplex them with subtle questions. So long as they could figure thus, moreover, they were cheerful, complaisant, gracious, condescending. But the slightest contradiction ruffled their temper. Even Gorgias, the ablest and most gentlemanly of them all, was incapable of enduring this test; and, when closely pressed by Socrates, grew angry, and became ready to quarrel. Plat. Oper. III. 25. ff. *Bekk.*—Ed.

unto the enemies of truth. A man may be in as just possession of truth as of a city, and yet be forced to surrender; it is therefore far better to enjoy her with peace, than to hazard her on a battle: if therefore there rise any doubts in my way, I do forget them, or at least defer them till my better settled judgment, and more manly reason be able to resolve them, for I perceive every man's own reason is his best Œdipus, ([13]) and will, upon a reasonable truce, find a way to loose those bonds wherewith the subtleties of error have enchained our more flexible and tender judgments. In philosophy, where truth seems double-faced, there is no man more paradoxical than myself; but in divinity I love to keep the road; and though not in an implicit, yet a humble faith, follow the great wheel of the church, by which I move, not reserving any proper poles or motion from the epicycle of my own brain; by this means I have no gap for heresy, schisms, or errors, of which at present I hope I shall not injure truth to say, I have no taint or tincture. I must confess my greener studies have been polluted with two or three, not any begotten in the latter centuries, but old and obsolete, such as could never have been revived, but by such extravagant and irregular heads as mine; for indeed heresies perish not with their authors, but like the river Arethusa, ([14])

([13]) That is, we should exercise the right of private judgment, which is to be pre-eminently Protestants.—Ed

([14]) Who would not think that this expression was taken from Montaigne, II. 12. "Nature enserre dans les termes de son progres ordinaire comme toutes autres choses aussi les creances

though they lose their currents in one place, they rise up again in another. One general council is not able to extirpate one single heresy: it may be cancelled for the present, but revolution of time, and the like aspects from heaven will restore it, when it will flourish till it be condemned again. For as though there were metempsychosis, and the soul of one man passed into another; opinions do find, after certain revolutions, men and minds like those that first begat them. To see ourselves again, we need not look for Plato's year: ([15]) every man is not only himself; there hath been many Diogenes, and as many Timons, though but few of that name; men are lived over again, the world is now as it was in ages past; there was none then, but there hath been some one since that parallels him, and as it were his revived self.

Now the first of mine was that of the Arabians, that the souls of men perished with their bodies, but should yet be raised again at the last day: ([16]) not

---

les jugements, et opinions des hommes; elles ont leurs revolutions;" and that Montaigne took his from Tully. "Non enim hominum interitu sententiæ quoque occidunt." *Tull. de Nat. Deor.* l. I. &c. Of the river Arethusa thus Seneca: "Videbis celebratissimum carminibus fontem Arethusam limpidissimi ac perlucidissimi ad imum stagni gelidissimas aquas profundentem, sive illas primum nascentes invenit, sive flumen integrum subter tot maria et à confusione pejoris undæ servatum reddidit." *Senec. de Consol. ad Martiam.* ANON. ANNOT.

([15]) A revolution of certain thousand years, when all things should return unto their former estate, and he be teaching again in his school as when he delivered this opinion.

([16]) This doctrine was, in the last age, maintained by Dr. Priestley; but appears to me as repugnant to reason, as it is in-

that I did absolutely conceive a mortality of the soul; but if that were, which faith, not philosophy, hath yet thoroughly disproved, and that both entered the grave together, yet I held the same conceit thereof that we all do for the body, that it rise again. Surely it is but the merits of our unworthy natures, if we sleep in darkness until the last alarm. A serious reflex upon my own unworthiness did make me backward from challenging this prerogative of my soul; so that I might enjoy my Saviour at the last, I could with patience be nothing almost unto eternity. The second was that of Origen, that God would not persist in his vengence for ever, but after a definite time of his wrath, ([17]) he would release the damned souls from torture: which error I fell into upon a serious contemplation of the great attribute of God—his mercy; and did a little cherish it in myself, because I found therein no malice, and a ready weight to sway me from the other extreme of despair, whereunto melancholy

consistent with Christianity. Montaigne (Essais, l. II. chap. 12.) has collected and arranged, in his rambling manner, now repeating an opinion, and now embalming it in some splendid extravagance, all the ideas of ancient and modern philosophers on the origin and destination of the soul. In my introduction to Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity, I have endeavoured to demonstrate the soul's immortality.—Ed.

([17]) On questions such as this it would be more becoming in man not to pretend to form an opinion. Origen, from whom Sir Thomas Browne borrowed this humane doctrine, entertained many other extraordinary notions, such as that the soul existed anterior to the body, which, as its earthly prison, was not, he conceived, to rise again. Phot. Biblioth. pp. 93. 293. 299. ed. *Bekk.*—Ed.

and contemplative natures are too easily disposed. A third there is which I did never positively maintain or practise, but have often wished it had been consonant to truth, and not offensive to my religion, and that is the prayer for the dead;([18]) whereunto I was inclined from some charitable inducements, whereby I could scarce contain my prayers for a friend at the ringing of a bell, or behold his corpse without an orison for his soul: it was a good way methought to be remembered by posterity, and far more noble than a history. These opinions I never maintained with pertinacity, or endeavoured to inveigle any man's belief unto mine, nor so much as ever revealed or disputed them with my dearest friends; by which means I neither propagated them in others, nor confirmed them in myself; but suffering them to flame upon their own substance, without addition of new fuel, they went out insensibly of themselves: therefore these opinions, though condemned by lawful councils were not heresies in me, but bare errors, and single lapses of my understanding, without a joint depravity of my will: those have not only depraved understandings, but diseased affections, which cannot enjoy a singularity without a heresy, or be the author of an

([18]) These are simply the vagaries of a meditative and solitary man, with more leisure than he knew how profitably to employ. They would, no doubt, have appeared many years ago damnable doctrines; and, going still further back, perfectly orthodox. Truth and error, in such matters, are regulated by chronology. After all, I see no harm in praying for the dead. It may be useless, but is not forbidden, and cannot therefore be evil.—Ed.

opinion without they be of a sect also. This was the villany of the first schism of Lucifer, who was not content to err alone, but drew into his faction many legions, ([19]) and upon this experience he tempted only Eve, as well understanding the communicable nature of sin, and that to deceive but one, was tacitly and upon consequence to delude them both.

That heresies should arise, we have the prophesy of Christ; but that old ones should be abolished, we hold no prediction. That there must be heresies, is true, not only in our church, but also in any other: even in the doctrines heretical, there will be super-heresies; and Arians not only divided from their church, but also among themselves: for heads that are disposed unto schism and complexionably propense to innovation, are naturally indisposed for a community; nor will be ever confined unto the order or economy of one body; and therefore when they separate from others, they knit but loosely among themselves; nor contented with a general breach or dichotomy with their church, do subdivide and mince themselves almost into atoms.

([19]) See on this sacred tradition, "Paradise Lost," V. 642, ff. with the references of the Rev. J. Mitford, whose labours in illustration of our divine poet deserve still more credit than they have received. In the passage of Milton here referred to, occurs the sublimest conception of the power of beauty, anywhere to be found in language: speaking of the angels whom Satan wheedled into revolt against the Almighty, he says—

> "His *countenance*, as the morning star that guides
> The starry flock, *allured them*, and with *lies*
> *Drew after him the third part of Heaven's host!*"

ED.

It is true, that men of singular parts and humours have not been free from singular opinions and conceits in all ages; retaining something not only beside the opinion of their own church or any other, but also any particular author; which, notwithstanding a sober judgment may do without offence or heresy; for there are yet, after all the decrees of councils, and the niceties of schools, many things untouched, unimagined, wherein the liberty of an honest reason may play and expatiate with security, and far without the circle of a heresy.

As for those wingy mysteries in divinity, and airy subtleties in religion, which have unhinged the brains of better heads, they never stretched the *pia mater* of mine. Methinks there be not impossibilities enough in religion for an active faith; the deepest mysteries ours contains, have not only been illustrated, but maintained by syllogism, and the rule of reason. I love to lose myself in a mystery, to pursue my reason to an *O altitudo!* It is my solitary recreation to pose my apprehension with those involved enigmas and riddles of the Trinity, with incarnation and resurrection. I can answer all the objections of Satan and my rebellious reason, with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian, *Certum est quia impossible est.* ([20]) I desire to ex-

([20]) This reads like a sneer, for whatever it may have been intended. I cannot wish, however, in these notes, to institute an inquisitorial research into motives, or to extract poison out of innocent expressions, or which, properly understood, may, peradventure, be innocent. But the impression made by this passage and others, is undoubtedly unfavourable to Sir Thomas Browne, who, by employing language palpably absurd, and affecting to

ercise my faith in the difficultest point; for to credit ordinary and visible objects, is not faith, but persuasion. Some believe the better for seeing Christ's sepulchre; and when they have seen the Red Sea, doubt not of the miracle. Now, contrarily, I bless myself, and am thankful that I lived not in the days of miracles; that I never saw Christ nor his disciples. I would not have been one of those Israelites that passed the Red Sea, nor one of Christ's patients on whom he wrought his wonders: then had my faith been thrust upon me; nor should I enjoy that greater blessing pronounced to all that believe and saw not. It is an easy and necessary belief, to credit what our eye and sense hath examined: I believe he was dead and buried, and rose again; and desire to see him in his glory, rather than to contemplate him in his cenotaph or sepulchre. Nor is this much to believe; as we have reason, we owe this faith unto history: they only had the advantage of a bold and noble faith, who lived before his coming, who upon obscure prophecies, and mystical types could raise a belief, and expect apparent impossibilities.

It is true, there is an edge in all firm belief, and

---

think it excusable in matters of religion, seems to be actuated by an insidious purpose, such as instigated Aristotle to remark of old, that obscene pictures and statues should nowhere be found, save in the temples of those gods whose rites required them. (Polit. VII. 16.) My views, both here and elsewhere, may no doubt be wrong—I sincerely hope they may; but, in editing a work, in other respects highly able and useful, I should not be performing my duty were I to suppress such suspicions as spontaneously present themselves.—Ed.

with an easy metaphor we may say, the sword of faith; but in these obscurities I rather use it in the adjunct the apostle gives it, a buckler; under which I conceive a wary combatant may lie invulnerable. Since I was of understanding to know we knew nothing, my reason hath been more pliable to the will of faith: I am now content to understand a mystery without a rigid definition, in an easy and Platonic description. That allegorical description of Hermes,([21]) pleaseth me beyond all the metaphysical definitions of divines: where I cannot satisfy my reason, I love to humour my fancy. I had as leave you tell me that *anima est angelus hominis, est Corpus Dei,* as *Entelechia; Lux est umbra Dei,* as *actus perspicui;* where there is an obscurity too deep for our reason, it is good to sit down with a description, periphrasis, or adumbration; for by acquainting our reason how unable it is to display the visible and obvious effects of nature, it becomes more humble and submissive unto the subtleties of faith; and thus I teach my haggard and unreclaimed reason to stoop unto the lure of faith. I believe there was already a tree whose fruit our unhappy parents tasted, though in the same chapter where God forbids it, it is positively said, the plants of the fields were not yet grown: for God had not caused it to rain upon the earth.([22]) I believe

([21]) Sphæra cujus centrum ubique, circumferentia nullibi.

([22]) The author of certain notes published in a former edition, refers, for a solution of this difficulty, to St. Augustin's commentary on Genesis. But I conceive that nothing more is needed than attentively to peruse the words of Scripture, which Sir

that the serpent, (if we shall literally understand it,) from his proper form and figure, made his motion on his belly before the curse. ([23]) I find the trial of the pucelage and virginity of women, which God ordained the Jews, is very fallible. ([24]) Experience and history inform me, that not only many particular women, but likewise whole nations have escaped the curse of childbirth, which God seems to pronounce upon the whole sex; yet do I

Thomas Browne grossly and palpably misrepresents. He would seem to have written carelessly, from memory; and, though he appears so positive, to have been positively ignorant of what the second chapter of Genesis contains. It is *not* there said that, when our first parents ate of the forbidden fruit, there was no tree in the garden on which it could have grown. On the contrary, having in the first chapter related the creation of fruit-trees on the *third* day, and of men on the *sixth*, Moses here glances a second time at the events of creation, and in four verses, 4—8, recapitulates the principal events. He then gives us, in verse 8, a kind of summary statement of what is to follow; and then, at large, describes the planting of the garden of Eden, and the placing of man in it: (v. 9—17.) What difficulty there may be in all this requires some ingenuity to discover.—Ed.

([23]) As the Bible nowhere positively affirms that the serpent did not creep upon its belly before the curse, perhaps no great evil is likely to arise from Sir Thomas's believing that it *did*; and he may be permitted to believe it accordingly.—Ed.

([24]) It could answer no good purpose to enter here into an examination of this question, which the annotator has himself shrunk from. Pinæus, (Opuscul. Physiolog. et Anatomic. I. 5, 6.) and Ludovicus Bonaciolus (De Fœtus Formatione, p. 150,) have taken the Scriptural view. Burton (Anatomy of Melancholy, II. 450. f.) has amassed numerous conflicting authorities; but with the learning of a mere bookworm. In our northern countries, the greatest possible uncertainty envelopes the whole subject, as the most able physiologists confess. Conf. Blumenbach, Physiol. §. 539. Virey, De La Femme, p. 72. ff.—Ed.

believe that all this is true, which indeed my reason would persuade me to be false; and this I think is no vulgar part of faith, to believe a thing not only above, but contrary to reason, and against the arguments of our proper senses. ([25])

In my solitary and retired imagination, (*Neque enim cum porticus, aut me lectulus accepit, desum mihi,*) I remember I am not alone, and therefore forget not to contemplate Him and his attributes who is ever with me, especially those two mighty ones, his wisdom and eternity; with the one I recreate, with the other I confound my understanding: for who can speak of eternity without a solecism, or think thereof without an ecstacy? Time we may comprehend: it is but five days older than ourselves, and hath the same horoscope with the world; but to retire so far back as to apprehend a beginning, to give such an infinite start forwards as to conceive an end in an essence that we affirm hath neither the one nor the other, it puts my reason to St. Paul's sanctuary: my philosophy dares not say the angels can do it; God hath not made a creature

([25]) Here again, as above, the author is guilty of one of two things—impiety or absurdity. He no doubt possessed a considerable share of learning and abilities; but was never able at any time of his life, least of all when, at the age of thirty, he wrote this book, to fathom the depths of human reason, and say what was above, and what was contrary to it. The histories on which he relied, on the subject discussed in the text, should have been mentioned. In the course of my own researches, which have probably lain in a different track, I have met with none worthy of the slightest credit, whose testimony could be adduced in support of his hazardous assertions.—Ed.

that can comprehend him; it is a privilege of his own nature. "I am that I am," was his own definition unto Moses; and it was a short one, to confound mortality, that durst question God, ([26]) or ask him what he was; indeed he only is; all others have been and shall be. But in eternity there is no distinction of tenses; and therefore that terrible term, predestination, which hath troubled so many weak heads to conceive, and the wisest to explain, is in respect to God no prescious determination of our estates to come, but a definitive blast of his will already fulfilled, and at the instant that he first decreed it; for to his eternity which is indivisible, and altogether, the last trump is already sounded, the reprobates in the flame, and the blessed in Abraham's bosom. St. Peter speaks modestly, when he saith, a thousand years to God are but as one day: for to speak like a philosopher, those continued instances of time which flow into a thousand years, make not to him one moment; what to us is to come, to his eternity is present, his whole duration being but one permanent point, without succession, parts, flux, or division. ([27])

([26]) If the above speculation be not too intelligible, there runs through it a strain of piety which may excuse the absence of perspicuity. From this passage, perhaps, a modern writer borrowed his notion that with God all time is an "eternal now," which appears to be a flight somewhat too lofty for his own unassisted pinions.—Ed.

([27]) Few of the speculations in the "Religio Medici" are new: the merit of the author consists in skilfully adapting to his peculiar purpose the thoughts and meditations of others, which is also true in part of Montaigne. Here the substratum of the

There is no attribute that adds more difficulty to the mystery of the Trinity, were, though in a relative way of father and son, we must deny a priority. I wonder how Aristotle could conceive the world eternal, or how he could make good two eternities. His similitude of a triangle, comprehended in a square, doth somewhat illustrate the trinity of our souls, and that the triple unity of God; for there is in us not three, but a trinity of souls, because there is in us, if not three distinct souls, yet differing faculties, that can, and do subsist apart in different subjects, and yet in us are thus united as to make but one soul and substance. If one soul were so perfect as to inform three distinct bodies, that were a petty trinity: conceive the distinct number of three, not divided nor separated by the intellect, but actually comprehended in its unity, and that is a perfect trinity. I have often admired the mystical way of Pythagoras, and the secret magic of numbers. ([28]) Beware of philosophy, is a precept not to be received in too large a sense; for

whole disquisition was evidently furnished by Zabarella, who, with infinite subtlety and acuteness, has drawn a distinction between eternal self-existence, and the eternity of a thing existing in succession. To the latter non-existence is possible, since its being is not necessary, but dependent; to the former, existence is necessary, inevitable, since it is the fountain of whatever else exists.—But I fear this will not be thought to elucidate what is obscure in the text; and the metaphysics of our author few readers perhaps will now care to penetrate.—Ed.

([28]) For a very able outline of the Pythagorean philosophy, see Buhle, Histoire de la Philosophie Moderne. Introduction, t. I. p. 21—32. and Conf. Tennemann, Manuel. de l' Hist. de la Philosoph. art. Pythagor, *Tr. Franç.*—Ed.

in this mass of nature there is a set of things that carry in their front, though not in capital letters, yet in stenography, and short characters, something of divinity, which to wiser reasons serve as luminaries in the abyss of knowledge, and to judicious beliefs, as scales and rundles to mount the pinnacles and highest pieces of divinity. ([29]) The severe schools shall never laugh me out of the philosophy of Hermes, that this visible world is but a picture of the invisible, wherein as in a portrait, things are not truly, but in equivocal shapes, and as they counterfeit some real substance in that invisible fabric.

That other attribute wherewith I recreate my devotion, is his wisdom, in which I am happy; and for the contemplation of this only, do not repent me that I was bred in the way of study: the advantage I have of the vulgar, with the content and happiness I conceive therein, is an ample recompence for all my endeavours, in what part of knowledge soever.([30]) Wisdom is his most beauteous attribute; no man can attain unto it; yet Solomon

([29]) In this passage we have an example of that nervous eloquence common, amid all their quaintnesses, to our older writers. How few, in this age of elegant and refined literature, could conceive or express with similar power the train of thought developed in the text! It reads like an extract from Plato—and is not. What can I say more?—Ed.

([30]) It were difficult to decide which, in this passage, is most to be admired, the nobleness of the thought, or the vigour and stately flow of the language. To remain in ignorance of an author who can write thus, is to the public, a loss, and to a literary man something more. We ought to beware lest our ancestors be thought to have cast their pearls before—what I need not write.—Ed.

pleased God when he desired it. He is wise, because he knows all things; and he knoweth all things, because he made them all: but his greatest knowledge is in comprehending that he made not, that is, himself. And this is also the greatest knowledge in man. For this do I honour my own profession, and embrace the counsel even of the devil himself: had he read such a lecture in paradise, as he did at Delphos,([31]) we had better known ourselves; nor had we stood in fear to know him. I know he is wise in all, wonderful in what we conceive, but far more in what we comprehend not; for we behold him but asquint upon reflex or shadow; our understanding is dimmer than Moses's eye; we are ignorant of the back parts or lower side of his divinity; therefore to pry into the maze of his counsels, is not only folly in man, but presumption even in angels; like us, they are his servants, not his senators; he holds no counsel, but that mystical one of the Trinity, wherein, though there be three persons, there is but one mind that decrees without contradiction: nor needs he any; his actions are not begot with deliberation, his wisdom naturally knows what is best; his intellect stands ready fraught with the superlative and purest ideas([32]) of goodness; consultation and election, which are two motions in us, make but

([31]) Γνῶθι σεαυτόν, Nosce teipsum.

([32]) This is one among many examples in our older literature of the employment of the term *idea* in the sense in which it is used by Locke, supposed to have been the first to introduce it.—Ed.

one in him; his action springing from his power, at the first touch of his will. These are contemplations metaphysical: my humble speculations have another method, and are content to trace and discover those expressions he hath left in his creatures, and the obvious effects of nature; there is no danger to profound these mysteries, no *sanctum sanctorum* in philosophy: the world was made to be inhabited by beasts; but studied and contemplated by man: it is the debt of our reason we owe unto God, and the homage we pay for not being beasts; without this, the world is still as though it had not been, or as it was before the sixth day, when as yet there was not a creature that could conceive, or say there was a world. The wisdom of God receives small honour from those vulgar heads that rudely stare about, and with a gross rusticity admire his works;([33]) those highly magnify him, whose judicious inquiry into his acts, and deliberate research into his creatures, return the duty of a devout and learned admiration. Therefore,

> Search where thou wilt, and let thy reason go
> To ransom truth even to th' abyss below;

([33]) Of this the Swiss furnish an example. Placed in the midst of grandest scenery, of mountains indescribably beautiful or sublime, they generally remain insensible of their attractions, and have only begun to value them, since the English have been thither to spend money. Education, without augmenting the cant about the picturesque, would render them more truly alive to

> "What heaven has done for that delicious land."

Rally the scattered causes; and that line
Which nature twists, be able to untwine;
It is thy Maker's will, for unto none,
But unto reason can he e'er be known.
The devils do know thee, but those damn'd meteors
Build not thy glory, but confound thy creatures.
Teach my endeavours so thy works to read,
That learning them in thee, I may proceed.
Give thou my reason that instructive flight,
Whose weary wings may on thy hands still light.
Teach me to soar aloft, yet ever so,
When near the sun to stoop again below.
Thus shall my humble feathers safely hover,
And though near earth, more than the heaven's discover.
And then at last, when homeward I shall drive
Rich with the spoils of nature to my hive,
There will I sit, like that industrious fly,
Buzzing thy praises, which shall never die,
Till death abrupts them, and succeeding glory
Bid me go on in a more lasting story.

And this is almost all wherein a humble creature may endeavour to requite, and some way to retribute unto his Creator: for if not he that saith 'Lord, Lord, but he that doth the will of his Father, shall be saved;' certainly our wills must be our performances, and our intents make out our actions; otherwise our pious labours shall find anxiety in our graves, and our best endeavours not hope, but fear a resurrection.

There is but one first cause, and four second causes of all things; some are without efficient, as God; others without matter, as angels; some without form, as the first matter :([34]) but every

([34]) This specimen of scholastic nonsense has been admirably ridiculed by Butler:

essence, created or uncreated, hath its final cause, and some positive end both of its essence and operation; this is the cause I grope after in the works of nature; on this hangs the providence of God. To raise so beauteous a structure, as the world and the creatures thereof, was but his art; but their sundry and divided operations, with their predestinated ends, are from the treasure of his wisdom. In the causes, nature, and affections of the eclipses of the sun and moon, there is most excellent speculation; but to profound farther, and to contemplate a reason why his providence hath so disposed and ordered their motions in that vast circle, as to conjoin and obscure each other, is a sweeter piece of reason, and a diviner point of philosophy; therefore sometimes, and in some things, there appears to me as much divinity in Galen's books *De Usu Partium*, as in Suarez's Metaphysics: had Aristotle been as curious in the inquiry of this cause as he was of the other, he had not left behind him an imperfect piece of philosophy, but an absolute tract of divinity.

Natura nihil aget frustra, is the only indisputed axiom in philosophy; there are no grotesques in nature; not anything framed to fill up empty cantons, and unnecessary spaces: in the most imperfect creatures, and such as were not preserved in the ark, but having their seeds and principles

——— "as he professed,
He had first matter seen undressed:
He took her naked, all alone,
Before one rag of form was on!"

ED.

in the womb of nature, are everywhere, where the power of the sun is,([35]) in these is the wisdom of his hand discovered. Out of this rank Solomon chose the objects of admiration; indeed what reason may not go to school to the wisdom of bees, ants, and spiders? what wise hand teacheth them to do what reason cannot teach us? ruder heads stand amazed at those prodigious pieces of nature, whales, elephants, dromedaries, and camels; these I confess are the colossus and majestic pieces of her hand: but in these narrow engines there is more curious mathematics; and the civility of these little citizens, more neatly sets forth the wisdom of their Maker. Who admires not Regio Montanus's fly beyond his eagle, or wonders not more at the operation of two souls in those little bodies, than but one in the trunk of a cedar? I could never content my contemplation with those general pieces of wonder, the flux and reflux of the sea, the increase of Nile, the conversion of the needle to the north; and have studied to match and parallel those in the more obvious and neglected pieces of nature, which without further travel I can do in the cosmography of myself. We carry with us the wonders we seek without us:([36]) there is all Africa and her

([35]) In fact the germs of insects appear to be diffused throughout every substance in nature, and in some cases to lie thousands of years undeveloped; which, if true, will account for the seeming production of organized life by the action of the voltaic battery, in our own days; that is, if there be no misapprehension on the part of the experimentalist.—Ed.

([36]) This is most true, as even the careless observer, without the aid of physiology, may discover. But when, through the

prodigies in us: we are that bold and adventurous piece of nature, which he that studies wisely learns in a compendium, what others labour at in a divided piece and endless volume.

Thus there are two books from whence I collect my divinity—besides that written one of God, another of his servant nature; that universal and public manuscript,(37) that lies expanded unto the eyes of all—those that never saw him in the one, have discovered him in the other. This was the scripture and theology of the heathens; the natural motion of the sun made them more admire him, than its supernatural station did the children of Israel; the ordinary effects of nature wrought more admiration in them than in the other all his miracles: surely the heathens knew better how to join and read these mystical letters, than we Christians, who cast a more care-

---

avenues opened up to us by science, we penetrate into the far and secret recesses of our own nature, and behold the perfect animal arising out of substances apparently inorganized—when we perceive the almost invisible springs by which the first-fruit of animal nourishment is supplied—the apparatus of vision—the material instruments of thought—in short, the miraculous structure of our whole frame—we are disposed to exclaim with the prophet king, "O Lord! I am fearfully and wonderfully made!"—Ed.

(37) There is a quaint sublimity in the above phrase, characteristic of the author. He is right, too, in his remarks on the effect of external nature on the civilized people of antiquity, who, by the contemplation of that alone, acquired very just notions of God. In fact, Ray, and Derham, and Paley, with many other theologians who have written elaborately on the proofs (shame they should ever be needed) of God's existence, have done, and could do, little more than amplify the arguments of pagan philosophers. To turn to no more recondite source

less eye on these common hieroglyphics,(38) and disdain to suck divinity from the flowers of nature. Nor do I so forget God as to adore the name of nature; which I define not with the schools, to be the principle of motion and rest, but that straight and regular line, that settled and constant course the wisdom of God hath ordained the actions of his creatures, according to their several kinds. To make a revolution every day, is the nature of the sun, because of that necessary course which God hath ordained it, from which it cannot swerve, by a faculty from that voice which first did give it motion.

---

than Xenophon, observe the pious and eloquent description which Socrates gives of the sun's approach and retreat from the temperate zone, ripening and corroborating certain productions, parching up others, but taking care never to draw so near as to render its rays pernicious. In the course of the discussion he insists upon his gradual movements, which insensibly lead us from one extreme to another. Upon which his opponent, in the true spirit of a "minute philosopher," damps the piety of the philosopher by the following sophism. "It would afford me satisfaction to know," says he, "that all these contrivances were intended for the benefit of mankind: but there is one objection; which is, that the vicissitudes of the year bring the same advantages to all other animals." "No doubt," replied Socrates; "but then, these animals themselves are so many ingredients of human enjoyment."—*Xenoph. Memor.* IV. 2. 3. ff. He might have added, that the benefit to us is not the less because other creatures also are benefited; and that it is an additional proof of the Creator's wisdom, that while providing abundantly for the happiness of the superior animal, he has rendered the self-same means subservient to the wants of a thousand inferior species.—Ed.

(38) Compare what has been said above with the critique on Paley's Physical Theology in the Edinburgh Review.—Ed.

Now this course of nature God seldom alters or perverts, but like an excellent artist hath so contrived his work, that with the selfsame instrument, without a new creation, he may effect his obscurest designs. Thus he sweeteneth the water with a word, preserveth the creatures in the ark, which the blast of his mouth might have as easily created; for God is like a skilful geometrician,([39]) who when more easily, and with one stroke of his compass, he might describe or divide a right line, had yet rather to do this in a circle or longer way, according to the constituted and fore-laid principles of his art: yet this rule of his he doth sometimes pervert, to acquaint the world with his prerogative, lest the arrogancy of our reason should question his power, and conclude he could not. And thus I call the effects of nature the works of God, whose hand and instrument she only is; and therefore to ascribe his actions unto her, is to devolve the honour of the principal agent upon the instrument; which if with reason we may do, then let our hammers rise up and boast they have built our houses, and our pens receive the honour of our writing.([40]) I hold there is a general beauty in the works of God, and therefore no deformity in any kind or species of creature whatsoever. I cannot tell by what logic we call a toad, a bear, or an elephant ugly, they being created in those outward shapes and figures which best express those actions of their inward

([39]) Conf. Plato. in Timæo.

([40]) Similar remarks occur in the "Essay on the Human Understanding."—Ed.

forms. And having past that general visitation of God, who saw that all that he had made was good, that is, conformable to his will, which abhors deformity, and is the rule of order and beauty; there is no deformity but in monstrosity, wherein notwithstanding there is a kind of beauty. Nature so ingeniously contriving the irregular parts, as they become sometimes more remarkable than the principal fabric. To speak yet more narrowly, there was never any thing ugly or mis-shapen, but the chaos; wherein notwithstanding, to speak strictly, there was no deformity, because no form, nor was it yet impregnate by the voice of God.(41) Now nature is not at variance with art, nor art with nature; they being both servants of his providence. Art is the perfection of nature: were the world now as it was the sixth day, there were yet a chaos. Nature hath made one world, and art another. In brief, all things are artificial; for nature is the art of God.

This is the ordinary and open way of his providence, which art and industry have in a good part discovered, whose effects we may foretell without an oracle: to foreshow these, is not prophecy, but prognostication. There is another way full of me-

(41) There is a singular sublimity in the images presented to the mind in this passage, which recals to mind another replete with superior majesty. It is where Milton, addressing the Deity, says,

> "Thou
> Dove-like sat'st brooding o'er the vast abyss,
> And mad'st it pregnant."

ED.

anders and labyrinths, whereof the devil and spirits have no exact ephemerides, and that is a more particular and obscure method of his providence, directing the operations of individuals and single essences: this we call fortune, that serpentine and crooked line, whereby he draws those actions his wisdom intends in a more unknown and secret way:([42]) this cryptic and involved method of his providence have I ever admired, nor can I relate the history of my life, the occurrences of my days, the escapes of dangers, and hits of chance, with a *Bezo los Manos* to fortune, or a bare gramercy to my good stars. Abraham might have thought the ram in the thicket came thither by accident; human reason would have said, that mere chance conveyed Moses in the ark to the sight of Pharaoh's daughter: what a labyrinth is there in the story of Joseph, able to convert a stoic! Surely there are in every man's life certain rubs, doublings and wrenches, which pass awhile under the effects of chance, but at the last, well examined, prove the mere hand of God. It was not dumb chance that, to discover the fougade, or powder-plot, contrived a miscarriage in the letter. I like the victory of eighty-eight the better for that one occurrence which our enemies imputed to our dishonour, and the partiality of fortune, to wit, the tempests and contrariety of winds. King Philip

([42]) That is, Sir Thomas Browne, in his meditations, substituted, as every Christian should, Providence for Fortune, which in our mouths is a word without meaning.—Ed.

did not detract from the nation, when he said, he sent his Armada to fight with men, and not to combat with the winds. Where there is a manifest disproportion between the powers and forces of two several agents, upon a maxim of reason we may promise the victory to the superior; but when unexpected accidents slip in, and unthought of occurrences intervene, these must proceed from a power that owes no obedience to those axioms;([43]) where, as in the writing upon the wall, we may behold the hand, but see not the spring that moves it. The success of that petty province of Holland (of which the grand seignor proudly said, if they should trouble him as they did the Spaniard, he would send his men with shovels and pickaxes, and throw it into the sea) I cannot altogether ascribe to the ingenuity and industry of the people, but the mercy of God, that hath disposed them to such a thriving genius; and to the will of his providence, that disposeth her favour to each country in their preordinate season. All cannot be happy at once; for because the glory of one state depends upon the ruin of another, there is a revolution and vicissitude of their greatness, and they must obey the swing of that wheel, not moved by intelligences,

([43]) In every occurrence not miraculous, it would be possible, did we possess a full knowledge of all the circumstances, certainly to foretell the event. Things fall out contrary to our expectation simply because of our ignorance, which, in most cases, is far greater than it need be. That marvellous sagacity which we so much admire in Themistocles (Thucyd. I. 138. Corn. Nep. in Vit. c. 1.) was the fruit of a diligent study of the men and things around him.—Ed.

but by the hand of God, whereby all estates arise to their zenith and vertical points, according to their predestinated periods. For the lives, not only of men, but of commonwealths, and the whole world run not upon a helix that still enlargeth, but on a circle, where arriving to their meridian, they decline in obscurity, and fall under the horizon again.([44])

These must not therefore be named the effects of fortune, but in a relative way, and as we term the works of nature: it was the ignorance of man's reason that begat this very name, and by a careless term miscalled the Providence of God: for there is no liberty for causes to operate in a loose and straggling way; nor any effect whatsoever, but hath its warrant from some universal or superior cause. It is not a ridiculous devotion to say a prayer before a game at tables; for even in sortileges and matters of greatest uncertainty, there is a settled and preordered course of effects. It is we that are blind, not Fortune: because our eye is too dim to discover the mystery of her effects, we foolishly paint her blind, and hoodwink the providence of the Almighty.([45]) I cannot justify that contemptible

([44]) Volney, (Ruines des Empires, ch. II.) applying this idea to futurity, has produced a passage of solemn and impressive eloquence. "Perhaps some traveller," says he, "may hereafter sit down solitary on the banks of the Thames, the Seine, or the Zuyder Zee, and lament the departed glory of a people now inurned, and their greatness changed into an empty name."—Ed.

([45]) See note 40, and compare the whole of Bishop Butler's 15th Sermon, particularly that portion of §. I. in which, after

proverb, that fools only are fortunate; or that insolent paradox, that a wise man is out of the reach of fortune; much less those opprobrious epithets of poets, whore, bawd, and strumpet. It is, I confess, the common fate of men of singular gifts of mind, to be destitute of those of fortune; which doth not any way deject the spirit of wiser judgments, who thoroughly understand the justice of this proceeding; and being enriched with higher donatives, cast a more careless eye on these vulgar parts of felicity.([46]) It is a most unjust ambition to desire to engross the mercies of the Almighty, not to be content with the goods of mind, without a possession of those of body or fortune: and it is an error worse than heresy, to adore these complimental and circumstantial pieces of felicity, and

---

many observations replete with wisdom, he says, "The dealings of God with the children of men, are not yet completed, and cannot be judged of by that part which is before us." And again:—"There is no manner of absurdity in supposing a veil on purpose drawn over some scenes of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the sight of which might some way or other strike us too strongly." p. 264. f.—Ed.

([46]) On this point let us hear the opinion of our dramatic philosopher, who speaks thus of reverses of fortune, &c. which, he says,

> "Are, indeed, nought else
> But the protractive trials of great Jove,
> To find persistive constancy in men;
> The fineness of which metal is not found
> In fortune's love; for there, the bold and coward,
> The wise and fool, the artist and unread,
> The hard and soft, seem all affined and kin;
> But in the wind and tempest of her frown,
> Distinction with a broad and powerful fan,
> Puffing at all, winnows the light away,
> While what hath mass or matter, by itself
> Lies rich in virtue, and unmingled."
>
> *Troilus and Cressida*, I. 5.—Ed.

undervalue those perfections and essential points of happiness, wherein we resemble our Maker. To wiser desires it is satisfaction enough to deserve, though not to enjoy, the favours of fortune; let Providence provide for fools. It is not partiality, but equity in God, who deals with us but as our natural parents: those that are able of body and mind, he leaves to their deserts; to those of weaker merits he imparts a larger portion, and pieces out the defect of one by the access of the other.([47]) Thus have we no just quarrel with nature, for leaving us naked; or to envy the horns, hoofs, skins, and furs of other creatures, being provided with reason, that can supply them all.([48]) We need not labour with so

([47]) Poor men, however, would be hugging themselves in a fool's paradise, if they supposed this to be universally, or even generally true. But, if poverty be naked, "God," we know, "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb;"—he enables us to bear whatever he imposes on us; so that, considering the power of resistance to be always equal to the pressure, things are pretty nearly equal, after all.—Ed.

([48]) On this subject I would refer the reader to the very beautiful fable of Prometheus and Epimetheus, on the creation and endowment of animals, which Plato has interwoven with his Protagoras. It is far too long to be introduced into these notes; otherwise I might have translated it. Sir Thomas, however, had evidently been at the fountain-head, though he omits one of the gifts which the philanthropic Titan bestowed on his beloved race—fire, for the which he was condemned to ages of penance on the Caucasian ridge. (Æschyl. Prom. Vinct. v. 7.) To repair the error of his brother, who had lavished "horns, hoofs, skins, furs," &c. on the inferior creation, κλέπτε Ἡφαίστου καὶ Ἀθηνᾶς τὴν ἔντεχνον σοφίαν σὺν πυρί κ.τ.λ. that is, "he stole from Vulcan and Minerva their wisdom and their fire,—for without fire the inventive faculty would be useless,—and with these enriched the man whom he had made." (Platon. Oper. I. 172. *Bekk*).—Ed.

many arguments to confute judicial astrology ; for if there be a truth therein, it doth not injure divinity. If to be born under Mercury disposeth us to be witty, under Jupiter to be wealthy, I do not owe a knee unto these, but unto that merciful hand that hath ordered my indifferent and uncertain nativity unto such benevolent aspects. Those that hold that all things are governed by fortune, had not erred, had they not persisted there: the Romans that erected a temple to Fortune, acknowledged therein, though in a blinder way, somewhat of divinity ; for in a wise supputation all things begin and end in the Almighty. There is a nearer way to heaven than Homer's chain: an easy logic may conjoin heaven and earth in one argument, and with less than a sorites resolve all things into God. For though we christen effects by their most sensible and nearest causes, yet is God the true and infallible cause of all, whose concourse, though it be general, yet doth it subdivide itself into the particular actions of every thing, and is that spirit by which each singular essence not only subsists, but performs its operation.

The bad construction, and perverse comment on these pair of second causes, or visible hands of God, have perverted the devotion of many unto atheism ; who, forgetting the honest advisoes of faith, have listened unto the conspiracy of passion and reason. I have therefore always endeavoured to compose those feuds and angry dissentions between affection, faith, and reason: for there is in our soul a kind of triumvirate, or triple govern-

ment of three competitors, which distract the peace of this our commonwealth, not less than did that other the state of Rome.

As reason is a rebel unto faith, so passion unto reason: as the propositions of faith seem absurd unto reason, so the theorems of reason unto passion, and both unto faith;([49]) yet a moderate and peaceable discretion may so state and order the matter, that they may be all kings, and yet make but one monarchy, every one exercising his sovereignty and prerogative in a due time and place, according to the restraint and limit of circumstance. There are, as in philosophy, so in divinity, sturdy doubts, and boisterous objections, wherewith the unhappiness of our knowledge too nearly acquainteth us. More of these no man hath known than myself, which I confess I conquered, not in a martial posture, but on my knees.([50]) For our endeavours are not only to combat with doubts, but always to dispute with the devil: the villany of that spirit takes a hint of infidelity from our studies, and by demonstrating a naturality in one way, makes us mistrust a miracle in another. Thus having perused the archidoxes, and read the secret sympathies of things, he would dissuade my belief from the miracle of the brazen serpent, make me conceit that image worked by sympathy, and

([49]) Locke had considered this point somewhat more deeply than Sir Thomas Browne, and could discover nothing in faith which is *absurd* in the eye of reason, though much that reason fails to comprehend. But what does it comprehend?—Ed.

([50]) Here he speaks like a philosopher, conscious of his weakness, and cognizant of the source of all strength.—Ed.

was but an Egyptian trick to cure their diseases without a miracle. Again, having seen some experiments of bitumen, and having read far more of naphtha, he whispered to my curiosity the fire of the altar might be natural; and bid me mistrust a miracle in Elias, when he entrenched the altar round with water; for that inflammable substance yields not easily unto water, but flames in the arms of its antagonist. And thus would he inveigle my belief to think the combustion of Sodom might be natural, and that there was an asphaltic and bituminous nature in that lake before the fire of Gomorrah.([51]) I know that manna is now plentifully gathered in Calabria; and Josephus tells me, in his days it was as plentiful in Arabia; the devil therefore made the query, Where was then the miracle in the days of Moses? the Israelites saw but that in his time, the natives of those countries behold in ours. Thus the devil played at chess with me, and yielding a pawn, thought to gain a queen of me, taking advantage of my honest endeavours; and whilst I laboured to raise the structure of my reason, he strived to undermine the edifice of my faith.

Neither had these or any other ever such advantage of me, as to incline me to any point of infi-

([51]) And admitting all this—what then? Who denies that God condescends to employ the elements in his judgments? to do his errands in the vasty deep? It is suspected that a reservoir of volcanic matter extends beneath the whole of the Ionian islands, probably beneath the whole Mediterranean, which may have been formed by the falling in of the crust of such a cavernous hollow.—Ed.

delity or desperate positions of atheism; for I have been these many years of opinion there was never any. Those that held religion was the difference of man from beasts, have spoken probably, and proceed upon a principle as inductive as the other. That doctrine of Epicurus, that denied the providence of God, was no atheism, but a magnificent and high-strained conceit of his majesty, which he deemed too sublime to mind the trivial actions of those inferior creatures.([52]) That fatal necessity of the Stoics, is nothing but the immutable law of his will. Those that heretofore denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost, have been condemned, but as heretics: and those that now deny our Saviour (though more than heretics) are not so much as atheists: for though they deny two persons in the Trinity, they hold, as we do, there is but one God.

That villain and secretary of hell, that composed

([52]) In this I cannot agree with Sir Thomas Browne. Man, considered in himself, is not a contemptible creature; he is the work of God, and, within our experience, the chiefest work. To disparage him, therefore, is to disparage his Creator; so that it was not piety, but the reverse, which laid the basis of Epicureanism. Still, the doctrine of the old Gargettian was not atheism. With respect to man, it is only when he would vainly compare himself with his Maker that he becomes contemptible. Then even the inspired prophets proclaim his nothingness, and humble his pride in the dust. Hear Isaiah: "It is He that sitteth on the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers." (xl. 22.) What more need we to humble our pride? In a similar strain Homer:—

"Like leaves on trees the race of men is found,
Now in life, now withering on the ground!"—Ed.

that miscreant piece of the Three Impostors,(53) though divided from all religions, and was neither Jew, Turk, nor Christian, was not a positive atheist. I confess every country hath its Machiavel, every age its Lucian,(54) whereof common heads must not hear, nor advanced judgments too rashly ven-

(53) It was Ochinus that composed this piece; but there was no less a man than the Emperor Frederic the Second, that was as lavish of his tongue, as the other of his pen; "Cui sæpe in ore, tres fuisse insignes impostores, qui genus humanum seduxerunt, Moysem, Christum, Mahumitem." *Lips. Monit. et. Exempl. Polit.* c. 4. And a greater than he, Pope Leo the Tenth, was as little favourable to our Saviour, when he used that speech which is reported of him: "Quantas nobis divitias comparavit ista de Christo fabula!" ANON. ANNOT. In addition to the information furnished by the Annotator, I may observe, that the passage of Lipsius, which refers to the emperor solely, is found in Vol. IV. of his collected works, p. 347, (by mistake, 147,) where he relates it without citing any authority. He owed, however, the knowledge of the fact to Matthew Paris, who relates it in somewhat different language; and I owe the same to Burton, (Anatomy of Melancholy, Part. III. §. 4. Vol. II. p. 558,) who says, "Frederic the emperor, as Matthew Paris records, *licet non sit* recitabile," (I use his own words,) "is reported to have said, 'Tres prætigiatoes, Moses, Christus, et Mahomet, uti mundo dominarentur totum populum sibi contemporaneum seduxisse.' (Henry the Landgrave of Hesse heard him speak it.) 'Si principes imperii institutioni meæ adhærerent, ego multo meliorem modum credendi et vivendi ordinarem.'" *Math. Par. p.* 645. With the work "De Tribus Impostoribus," Marcennus (ap. Burton. *ubi sup.*) classes the "Mundi Cymbalum Dialogis Quattuor Contentum, an. 1538, auctore Peresio, Parisiis excusum." Giordano Bruno's wild production, exposed in the Spectator by Addison, Vanini's extravagancies, and Spinoza's "Tractatus Theologico-Politicus," once famous, have now sunk irrecoverably into obscurity.—ED.

(54) That Lucian was an infidel and a scoffer there can be no doubt on any one's mind who reads the "Jupiter Tragœdus," and many other of his pieces; but it is not quite certain that Macchi-

ture on: it is the rhetoric of Satan, and may pervert a loose or prejudicate belief.

I confess I have perused them all, and can discover nothing that may startle a discreet belief; yet are their heads carried off with the wind and breath of such motives. I remember a doctor in physic of Italy, who could not perfectly believe the immortality of the soul, because Galen seemed to make a doubt thereof. With another I was familiarly acquainted in France, a divine, and a man of singular parts, that on the same point was so plunged and gravelled with three lines of Seneca, ([55]) that all our antidotes, drawn from both Scripture and philosophy, could not expel the poison of his error. There are a set of heads that can credit the relations of mariners, yet question the testimonies of St. Paul; and peremptorily maintain the traditions of Ælian or Pliny, yet in histories of Scripture raise queries and objections, believing no more than they can parallel in human authors. I confess there are in Scripture stories that do exceed the fables of poets, and to a captious reader sound like Gargantua or Bevis. Search all the legends of times past, and the fabulous conceits of these present, and it will be hard to find one that deserves to carry the buckler unto Sampson; yet is all this of an easy possibility, if we conceive a divine con-

---

avelli deserves to be found in company so disreputable.—Ed.

([55]) Post mortem nihil est, ipsaque mors nihil.
Mors individua est, noxia corpori, nec patiens animæ—
Toti morimur, nullaque pars manet nostri.

course, or an influence from the little finger of the Almighty. It is impossible that either in the discourse of man, or in the infallible voice of God, to the weakness of our apprehensions there should not appear irregularities, contradictions, and antinomies: myself could show a catalogue of doubts, never yet imagined or questioned, as I know, which are not resolved at the first hearing; not fantastic queries or objections of air; for I cannot hear of atoms in divinity. I can read the history of the pigeon that was sent out of the ark, and returned no more, yet not question how she found out her mate that was left behind: that Lazarus was raised from the dead, yet not demand where in the interim his soul awaited; or raise a law-case, whether his heir might lawfully detain his inheritance bequeathed unto him by his death, and he, though restored to life, have no plea or title unto his former possessions. Whether Eve was framed out of the left side of Adam,([56]) I dispute not; because I stand not yet assured which is the right side of a man;([57]) or whether there be any such

([56]) A specimen of the literary trifling which amused our ancestors. To this Butler alludes, where, among the other profound acquisitions of the republican knight, (Butler was a royalist, and died neglected,) he enumerates his great proficiency in this department of science. He could, he says, tell

> "What Adam dreamt of, when his bride
> Came from her closet in his side.
> If either of them had a *navel*;
> Who first made music *malleable*."

The bad rhyme stops me—I can quote no more.—Ed.

([57]) Perhaps not, though probably he would never have en-

distinction in nature. That she was edified out of the rib of Adam, I believe, yet raise no question who shall arise with that rib at the resurrection. Whether Adam was an hermaphrodite,(58) as the rabbins contend upon the letter of the text, because it is contrary to reason there should be an hermaphrodite before there was a woman; or a composition of two natures, before there was a second composed. Likewise, whether the world was created in autumn, summer, or the spring, because it was created in them all; for whatsoever sign the sun possesseth, those four seasons are actually existent: it is the nature of this luminary to distinguish the several seasons of the year, all which it makes at one time in the whole earth, and successively in any part thereof. There are a bundle of curiosities, not only in philosophy, but in divinity, proposed and discussed by men of most supposed abilities, which indeed are not worthy our vacant hours, much less our serious studies. Pieces only fit to be placed in Pantagruel's library, or bound up with Tartaretus's *De Modo Cacandi*.(59)

These are niceties that become not those

---

tertained a doubt, or speculated at all on the subject, had not Plato (De Legg. VIII. 14. f. Bekk.) thought proper to make his airy citizens ambidextrous, and to ridicule the old-fashioned practice, which, however, has long outlived him.—Ed.

(58) Another bolt from the same quiver. The rabbins had been filching extravagances from the speech of Aristophanes in Plato's Symposion, where the original inhabitants of the world are described as having been all hermaphrodites, with four legs and arms, &c.—Ed.

(59) In Rabelais.

that peruse so serious a mystery: there are others more generally questioned and called to the bar, yet methinks of an easy and possible truth.

It is ridiculous to put off, or down, the general flood of Noah, in that particular inundation of Deucalion: that there was a deluge once, seems not to me so great a miracle as that there is not one always. How all the kinds of creatures, not only in their own bulks, but with a competency of food and sustenance, might be preserved in one ark, and within the extent of three hundred cubits, to a reason that rightly examines it, will appear very feasible. There is another secret not contained in the Scripture, which is more hard to comprehend, and put the honest father to the refuge of a miracle: and that is, not only how the distinct pieces of the world, and divided islands should be first planted by men, but inhabited by tigers, panthers, and bears. How America abounded with beasts of prey and noxious animals, yet contained not in it that necessary creature, a horse, is very strange. By what passage those, not only birds, but dangerous and unwelcome beasts came over: how there be creatures there, (which are not found in this triple continent,) all which must needs be strange unto us, that hold but one ark, and that the creatures began their progress from the mountains of Ararat. They who to solve this would make the deluge particular, proceed upon a principle that I can no way grant; not only upon the negative of holy Scriptures, but of my own reason,

whereby I can make it probable, that the world was as well peopled in the time of Noah as in ours; and fifteen hundred years to people the world, as full a time for them, as four thousand years since have been to us. There are other assertions and common tenets drawn from Scripture, and generally believed as Scripture, whereunto, notwithstanding, I would not betray the liberty of my reason. It is a paradox to me, that Methusalem was the longest lived of all the children of Adam, and no man will be able to prove it; when, from the process of the text, I can manifest it may be otherwise. That Judas perished by hanging himself, there is no certainty in Scripture: though in one place it seems to affirm it, and by a doubtful word hath given occasion to translate it; yet in another place, in a more punctual description, it makes it improbable, and seems to overthrow it. That our fathers, after the flood, erected the tower of Babel, to preserve themselves against a second deluge, is generally opinioned and believed, yet is there another intention of theirs expressed in Scripture. Besides, it is improbable, from the circumstance of the place, that is, a plain in the land of Shinar. These are no points of faith, and therefore may admit a free dispute. There are yet others, and those familiarly conclude from the text, wherein (under favour) I see no consequence: the church of Rome, confidently proves the opinion of tutelary angels, from that answer when Peter knocked at the door; "It is not he, but his angel;" that

is, might some say, his messenger, or somebody from him; for so the original signifies; and is as likely to be the doubtful phrase's meaning.([61]) This exposition I once suggested to a young divine, that answered upon this point; to which I remember the Franciscan opponent replied no more; but that it was a new, and no authentic interpretation.

These are but the conclusions and fallible discourses of man upon the word of God, such I do believe the holy Scriptures; yet were it of man, I could not choose but say, it was the singularest, and superlative piece that hath been extant since the creation: were I a pagan, I should not refrain the lecture of it; and cannot but commend the judgment of Ptolemy, that thought not his library complete without it. The Alcoran of the Turks (I speak without prejudice) is an ill composed piece, containing in it vain and ridiculous errors in philosophy, impossibilities, fictions, and vanities beyond

([61]) On the guardian angels, or tutelar genii of the ancients, see Lilius Gyraldus, (Hist. Deor. Synt. XV. col. 435. ff.) "Censorinus Genium Deum ait, cujus in tutela, ut quisque natus vivit; sive etiam, quod ut generemur curat, sive, quod una gignitur nobiscum; sive etiam, quòd nos genitos suscipiat ac tueatur." *Conf. Natales Comes.* IV. 3. 295. ff. This writer infuses more of poetical colouring into his account than Gyraldus. In the worship of the Genii, offerings of wine were made in *pateræ*, and flowers freshly gathered were sprinkled on the greensward. (Horat. Epist. II. I, 143. f.) We are said, however, by these traditions, to have as well an evil genius as a good; and Pausanius is so obliging as to describe their form. (VII. 17. 10. f.)—Ed.

laughter, maintained by evident and open sophisms, the policy of ignorance, deposition of universities, and banishment of learning; that hath gotten foot by arms and violence: this, without a blow, hath disseminated itself through the whole earth. It is not unremarkable what Philo first observed, that the law of Moses continued two thousand years without the least alteration; whereas, we see the laws of other commonwealths do alter with occasions: and even those that pretend their original from some divinity, to have vanished without trace or memory. I believe, besides Zoroaster, there were divers that wrote before Moses,([62]) who, notwithstanding, have suffered the common fate of time. Men's works have an age like themselves; and though they outlive their authors, yet have they a stint and period to their duration. This only is a work too hard for the teeth of time, and cannot perish but in the general flames, when all things shall confess their ashes.

I have heard some with deep sighs lament the lost lines of Cicero; others with as many groans deplore the combustion of the library of Alexandria. For my own part, I think there be too many in the world, and could with patience behold the urn and ashes of the Vatican, could I, with a few others, recover the perished leaves of Solomon. ([63])

([62]) The book of Job is by many supposed to be more ancient than the Pentateuch; and the original Institutes of Menû were, very probably, of a still earlier date. But this is certainly not true of the existing laws of that very whimsical legislator. See my work on the Hindoos, Vol. II. ch. xv.—Ed.

([63]) There is no harm in extravagant nonsense of this descrip-

I would not omit a copy of Enoch's Pillars, had they many nearer authors than Josephus, or did not relish somewhat of the fable. Some men have written more than others have spoken. Pineda quotes more authors in one work, than are necessary in a whole world.([64]) Of those three great inventions in Germany, there are two which are not without their incommodities, and it is disputable whether they exceed not their use and commodities. It is not a melancholy *utinam* of my own, but the desires of better heads, that there were a general synod; not to unite the incompatible difference of religion, but for the benefit of learning, to reduce it as it lay at first, in a few and solid authors; and to condemn to the fire those swarms and millions of rhapsodies, begotten only to distract and abuse the weaker judgments of scholars, and to maintain the trade and mystery of typographers. ([65])

I cannot but wonder with what exception the Samaritans could confine their belief to the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses. I am ashamed at

---

tion For my own part, I would prefer keeping what we have, to recovering what we have lost; though I make no doubt that many excellent productions have wholly perished. With respect to the writings of Solomon, since they were merely works of natural history, many, probably, would postpone them to the lost decades of Livy, and the missing books of Tacitus. —Ed.

([64]) Pineda in his Monarchica Ecclesiastica quotes one thousand and forty authors.

([65]) They had already, we see, begun to experience the evils of book-making, which, as Bacon observes, are only to be cured by making more books; that is, such as shall cause the bad ones to be forgotten.—Ed.

the rabbinical interpretation of the Jews, upon the Old Testament, as much as their defection from the New. And truly it is beyond wonder, how that contemptible and degenerate issue of Jacob, once so devoted to ethnic superstition, and so easily seduced to the idolatry of their neighbours, should now, in such an obstinate and peremptory belief, adhere unto their own doctrine, expect impossibilities, and in the face and eye of the church, persist without the least hope of conversion. This is a vice in them, that were a virtue in us; for obstinacy in a bad cause is but constancy in a good. And herein I must accuse those of my own religion; for there is not any of such a fugitive faith, such an unstable belief, as a Christian;(66) none that do so oft transform themselves, not unto several shapes of Christianity, and of the same species, but unto more unnatural and contrary forms, of Jew and Mahometan; that from the name of saviour, can condescend to the bare term of prophet; and from an old belief that he is come, fall to a new expectation of his coming. It is the promise of Christ to make us all one flock; but how, and when this union shall be, is as obscure to me as the last day. Of those four members of religion, we hold a slender proportion; there are, I confess, some new additions, yet small to those which accrue to our adversaries, and those only drawn from the revolt of pagans, men but of negative impieties, and such

(66) Necessarily, because it is a religion of life and of inquiry; not (at least in non-essentials) a cast-iron faith, like that of the Jews and Mohammedans.—Ed.

as deny Christ, but because they never heard of him. But the religion of the Jews is expressly against the Christian; and the Mahometan against both. For the Turk, in the bulk he now stands, he is beyond all hope of conversion: if he fall asunder, there may be conceived hopes, but not without strong improbabilities. The Jew is obstinate in all fortunes; the persecution of fifteen hundred years hath but confirmed them in their error: they have already endured whatsoever may be inflicted, and have suffered, in a bad cause, even to the condemnation of their enemies. Persecution is a bad and indirect way to plant religion; ([67]) it hath been the unhappy method of angry devotions, not only to confirm honest religion, but wicked heresies, and extravagant opinions. It was the first stone and basis of our faith; none can more justly boast of persecutions, and glory in the number and valour of martyrs; for, to speak properly, those are true, and almost only examples of fortitude. Those that are fetched from the field, or drawn from the actions of the camp, are not oft-times so truly precedents of valour as audacity, and at the best attain but to some bastard piece of fortitude. If we shall strictly examine the circumstances and requisites which Aristotle requires to true and perfect valour, we

([67]) But, as history clearly proves, religions may be planted by persecution; as they may be partially extinguished. Christianity was thus, *pro tempore*, extinguished in Japan, though ultimately to triumph; and Protestantism has, by the same means, been kept out of Spain and Italy. Upon the whole, however, Christianity has proved, that no human efforts can suppress our faith—which shows it to be of God.—Ed.

shall find the name only in his master, Alexander, and as little in that Roman worthy, Julius Cæsar; and if any, in that easy and active way, have done so nobly as to deserve that name, yet in the passive and more terrible piece these have surpassed, and in a more heroical way, may claim the honour of that title. It is not in the power of every honest faith to proceed thus far, or pass to heaven through the flames; every one hath it not in that full measure, or in so audacious and resolute a temper, as to endure those terrible tests and trials; who, notwithstanding, in a peaceable way do truly adore their Saviour, and have (no doubt) a faith acceptable in the eyes of God.

Now, as all that die in the war are not termed soldiers, so neither can I properly term all those that suffer in matters of religion, martyrs. The council of Constance condemns John Huss for a heretic: the stories of his own party style him a martyr. He must needs offend the divinity of both, that says he was neither the one nor the other. There are many (questionless) canonized on earth, that shall never be saints in heaven; and have their names in histories and martyrologies, who in the eyes of God are not so perfect martyrs, as was that wise heathen, Socrates, that suffered on a fundamental point of religion, the unity of God.([68]) I

([68]) Though by no means disposed to detract from the merit of Socrates, or to diminish one iota of the respect due to his memory, I must say that Sir Thomas Browne in this place gives him more credit, in a religious point of view, than he probably deserves. He was rather a political than a religious martyr;

have often pitied the miserable bishop that suffered in the cause of antipodes, yet cannot choose but accuse him of as much madness, for exposing his living on such a trifle, as those of ignorance and folly, that condemned him. I think my conscience will not give me the lie, if I say there are not many extant that in a noble way fear the face of death less than myself; yet from the moral duty I owe to the commandment of God, and the natural respects that I tender unto the conservation of my essence and being, I would not perish upon a ceremony, politic points, or indifferency. Nor is my belief of that untractable temper, as not to bow at their obstacles, or connive at matters wherein there are not manifest impieties. The leaven, therefore, and ferment of all, not only civil, but religious actions, is wisdom; without which, to commit ourselves to the flames is homicide, and (I fear) but to pass through one fire into another. ([69])

---

and was sacrified to the envy of the numerous sophists of his time, who wished to take the guidance of the people out of his hands. He narrowly escaped under the Thirty. Critias had already marked him out, and it is difficult to say how he came to spare his old master. Such a murder would have been worthy of the tyrant. But the honour was reserved for Melitus and Anytus—the excellent completers of what Aristophanes commenced in the Clouds. Vice can never sympathize with virtue; and, accordingly, we find, in our own day, persons of Melitus's kidney, who would put the old man to death now, if he lived, and were in their power.—Ed.

([69]) This betrays a narrowness of mind, and a degree of uncharitableness, which one finds it difficult to reconcile with those passages in the earlier part of the work, wherein he professes his readiness to pray, not only with, but for Jews, heretics, &c. Both reason and Scripture assure us, that with God it is the mo-

That miracles are ceased, I can neither prove, nor absolutely deny, much less define the time and period of their cessation. That they survived Christ, is manifest upon the record of Scripture: that they outlived the apostles also, and were revived at the conversion of nations, many years after, we cannot deny; if we shall not question those writers whose testimonies we do not controvert, in points that make for our own opinions; therefore that may have some truth in it that is reported by the Jesuits of their miracles in the Indies: I could wish it were true, or had any other testimony than their own pens. They may easily believe those miracles abroad, who daily conceive a greater at home, the transmutation of those visible elements into the body and blood of our Saviour. For the conversion of water into wine, which he wrought in Cana, or what the devil would have had him do in the wilderness, of stones into bread, compared to this, will scarce deserve the name of a miracle. ([70]) Though indeed, to speak properly, there is not one miracle greater than another, they being the extraordinary effects of the hand of God, to which all things are

---

tive that determines the merit of the action, not the "wisdom" of him who performs it; otherwise it would go hard with us all.—Ed.

([70]) The doctrine of transubstantiation, which the author here exposes, is built on the literal interpretation of a figurative passage. To us, of course, who have rejected it, its features present nothing but deformity; but if, as is our hope, the wise and merciful Creator of the universe will forgive the error of those who believe it, we, who are ourselves conscious of so many errors, may at least tolerate them.—Ed.

of an equal facility; and to create the world as easy as one single creature. For this is also a miracle, not only to produce effects against, or above nature, but before nature; and to create nature as great a miracle as to contradict, or transcend her. We do too narrowly define the power of God, restraining it to our capacities. I hold that God can do all things; how he should work contradictions I do not understand, yet dare not therefore deny. I cannot see why the angel of God should question Esdras to recall the time past, if it were beyond his own power; or that God should pose mortality in that which he was not able to perform himself. I will not say God cannot, but he will not perform many things, which we plainly affirm he cannot: this I am sure is the mannerliest proposition, wherein, notwithstanding, I hold no paradox. For strictly his power is the same with his will, and they both with all the rest do make but one God.

Therefore, that miracles have been, I do believe; that they may yet be wrought by the living, I do not deny: but have no confidence in those which are fathered on the dead; and this hath ever made me suspect the efficacy of relics, to examine the bones, question the habits and appurtenances of saints, and even of Christ himself. I cannot conceive why the cross that Helena found, and whereon Christ himself died, should have power to restore others unto life. ([71]) I excuse not Constantine

([71]) Sir Thomas Browne's war on relics might not, even now, be ill-timed, if the enemy could thus be subdued; but the keenest ridicule, and the fiercest declamation have been poured

from a fall off his horse, or a mischief from his enemies, upon the wearing those nails on his bridle, which our Saviour bore upon the cross in his hands. I compute among *piæ fraudes*, nor many degrees before consecrated swords and roses, that which Baldwin, king of Jerusalem, returned the Genoese for their cost and pains in his war, to wit, the ashes of John the Baptist. (72) Those that hold the sanctity of their souls doth leave behind a tincture and sacred faculty on their bodies, speak naturally of miracles, and do not solve the doubt. Now one reason I tender so little devotion unto relics is, I think, the slender and doubtful respect I have always held unto antiquities. For that indeed which I admire is far before antiquity, that is, eternity, and that is God himself; who, though he be styled the Ancient of Days, cannot receive the adjunct of antiquity, who was before the world, and shall be after it, yet is not older than it; for in his years there is no climacter; his duration is eternity and far more venerable than antiquity.

But above all things I wonder how the curiosity of wiser heads could pass that great and indisputable miracle, the cessation of oracles: and in what swoon their reasons lay, to content themselves, and

---

on the believers in them, in vain. The disease is chronic, and will last, under some shape or other, as long as humanity itself.—Ed.

(72) Baldwin, it must be allowed, discovered an easy mode of paying his debts. But such devices are not uncommon among princes, who having outwitted mankind on one point, are apt to put in practice a repetition of their arts.—Ed.

sit down with such a far-fetched, and ridiculous reason as Plutarch allegeth for it.(73) The Jews that can believe the supernatural solstice of the sun in the days of Joshua, have yet the impudence to deny the eclipse, which every pagan confessed, at his death: but for this, it is evident beyond all contradiction, the devil himself confessed it.(74) Certainly it is not a warrantable curiosity to examine the verity of Scripture by the concordance of human history, or seek to confirm the chronicle of Hester or Daniel, by the authority of Megasthenes or Herodotus. I confess I have had an unhappy curiosity this way, till I laughed myself out of it with a piece of Justin, where he delivers that the children of Israel, for being scabbed, were banished out of Egypt. And truly, since I have understood the occurrences of the world, and know in what counterfeit shapes and deceitful vizards times present represent on the stage things past, I do believe them little more than things to come. Some have been of my opinion, and endeavoured to write the history of their own lives; wherein Moses hath

(73) On the subject of oracles, I shall not detain the reader, my intention being fully to investigate it elsewhere. Sir Henry Blount's account, however, of the statue of Memnon, provokes a remark. That he had never seen it is clear; for, instead of being situated within "two bows'-shot" of the Pyramids, it is distant from them more than three hundred miles. The statue he describes must be the Sphynx; but even in that there is no hollow in the head above, though it is exceedingly probable that the ignorant natives told him what he relates.—Ed.

(74) In his oracle to Augustus.

outgone them all, and left not only the story of his life, but as some will have it, of his death also. ([75])

It is a riddle to me, how this story of oracles hath not wormed out of the world that doubtful conceit of spirits and witches; how so many learned heads should so far forget their metaphysics, and destroy the ladder and scale of creatures, as to question the existence of spirits: for my part, I have ever believed, and do now know, that there are witches. ([76]) They that doubt of these, do not only deny them, but spirits; and are obliquely, and upon consequence a sort, not of infidels, but atheists. Those that, to confute their incredulity, de-

([75]) This is absurd: the chapters of Deuteronomy, in which the death of Moses is described, are clearly an appendix by another writer.—Ed.

([76]) He here appears to have intended to refer to Pliny's Nat. Hist. xxx. c. 5, where "uncle Pliny," as Burton, on another occasion, denominates him, animadverts with much asperity on the debasing superstition of the emperor. "Immensum et indubitatum exemplum est falsæ artis, quam dereliquit Nero: utinam inferos potius et quoscunque de suspicionibus suis Deos consuluisset, quam lupanaribus atque prostitutis mandasset inquisitiones eas: nulla profecto sacra, barbari licet, ferique ritus, non mitiora, quam cogitationes ejus fuissent." But, in fact, the wretched sinner knew not whither to turn. Imperfect as his religion was, its doctrines had still the power to reach the imperial couch, and torture the master of the world to madness. The ghost of his murdered mother perpetually haunted him—he felt the scourge of the fabulous Furies, upon the members of his conscience—and their flaming torches glared for ever in his face. Therefore was it that he sought relief in magic, and employed "the wise men of the East" to call up his mother's shade, that he might appease it with superstitious rites and incantations. —(Sueton. in Vit. Neron. VI. 34.)—Ed.

sire to see apparitions, shall questionless never behold any, nor have the power to be so much as witches. The devil hath them already in a heresy as capital as witchcraft; and to appear to them, were but to convert them. Of all the delusions wherewith he deceives mortality, there is not any that puzzleth me more than the legerdemain of changelings. I do not credit those transformations of reasonable creatures into beasts, or that the devil hath a power to transpeciate a man into a horse,(77) who tempted Christ, (as a trial of his divinity,) to convert but stones into bread. I could believe that spirits use with man the act of carnality, and that in both sexes: I conceive they may assume, steal, or contrive a body, wherein there may be action enough to content decrepit lust, or passion to satisfy more active veneries; yet in both, without a possibility of generation: and therefore that opinion that Antichrist should be born of the tribe of Dan, by conjunction with the devil, is ridiculous, and a conceit fitter for a rabbin than a Christian. I hold that the devil doth really possess some men, the spirit of melancholy others, the spirit of delusion others;(78) that as the devil is concealed and denied by some, so God and good angels are pretended by others, whereof the late defection of the maid of Germany hath left a pregnant example.

(77) I am surprised Sir Thomas should boggle at this, after confessing his belief in witchcraft.—Ed.

(78) On all these varieties of madness the reader who possesses sufficient leisure and curiosity may consult Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, *passim*. The old man was mad himself, and therefore wrote on the subject *con amore*.—Ed.

Again, I believe that all that use sorceries, incantations, and spells are not witches, or, as we term them, magicians: I conceive there is a traditional magic, not learned immediately from the devil, but at second-hand from his scholars, who having once the secret betrayed, are able, and do empirically practise without his advice, they proceeding upon the principles of nature; where actives aptly conjoined to disposed passives, will under any master produce their effects. Thus I think at first a part of philosophy was witchcraft, which being afterward derived to one another, proved but philosophy, and was indeed no more but the honest effects of nature. What invented by us is philosophy, learned from him is magic. We do surely owe the discovery of many secrets, to the discovery of good and bad angels. I could never pass that sentence of Paracelsus, without an asterisk, or annotation; *Ascendens constellatum multa revelat, quærentibus magnalia naturæ*, i. e. *opera Dei.* ([79]) I do think that many mysteries ascribed to our own inventions, have been the courteous revelations of spirits; for those noble essences in heaven, bear a friendly regard unto their fellow-nature on earth; and therefore believe that those many prodigies and ominous prognostics, which forerun the ruins of states, princes, and private persons, are the charitable premonitions of good angels, which more careless inquiries term but the effects of chance and nature.

([79]) Thereby is meant, our good angel appointed us from our nativity.

Now, besides these particular and divided spirits, there may be (for aught I know) an universal and common spirit to the whole world. It was the opinion of Plato, and it is yet of the Hermetical philosophers: if there be a common nature that unites and ties the scattered and divided individuals into one species, why may there not be one that unites them all? However, I am sure there is a common spirit that plays within us, yet makes no part in us; and that is the Spirit of God, the fire and scintillation of that noble and mighty essence, which is the life and radical heat of spirits, and those essences that know not the virtue of the sun, a fire quite contrary to the fire of hell. This is that gentle heat that brooded on the waters, and in six days hatched the world; this is that irradiation that dispels the mists of hell, the clouds of horror, fear, sorrow, despair; and preserves the region of the mind in serenity. Whatsoever feels not the warm gale and gentle ventilation of this spirit, (though I feel his pulse,) I dare not say he lives;([80]) for truly without this, to me there is no heat under the tropic; nor any light, though I dwelt in the body of the sun.

> As when the labouring sun hath wrought his track
> Up to the top of lofty Cancer's back,
> The icy ocean cracks, the frozen pole,
> Thaws with the heat of the celestial coal;
> So when thy absent beams begin t'impart
> Again a solstice on my frozen heart,

([80]) A fine burst of enthusiasm, which warms the author into eloquence.—Ed.

My winter's o'er, my drooping spirits sing,
And every part revives into a spring.
But if thy quick'ning beams awhile decline,
And with their light bless not this orb of mine,
A chilly frost surpriseth every member,
And in the midst of June I feel December.
O how this earthly temper doth debase
The noble soul, in this her humble place!
Whose wingy nature ever doth aspire
To reach that place whence first it took its fire.
These flames I feel, which in my heart do dwell,
Are not thy beams, but take their fire from hell.
O quench them all, and let thy light divine,
Be as the sun to this poor orb of mine:
And to thy sacred spirit convert those fires,
Whose earthly fumes choke my devout aspires.

Therefore for spirits, I am so far from denying their existence, that I could easily believe, that not only whole countries, but particular persons have their tutelary and guardian angels: it is not a new opinion of the church of Rome, but an old one of Pythagoras and Plato; there is no heresy in it, and if not manifestly defined in Scripture, yet is an opinion of a good and wholesome use in the course and actions of a man's life, and would serve as an hypothesis to solve many doubts, whereof common philosophy affordeth no solution. Now, if you demand my opinion and metaphysics of their natures, I confess them very shallow, most of them in a negative way, like that of God; or in a comparative, between ourselves and fellow-creatures; for there is in this universe a stair, or manifest scale of creatures, rising not disorderly, or in confusion, but with a comely method and proportion. Between creatures of mere existence and things of

life, there is a large disproportion of nature; between plants and animals and creatures of sense, a wider difference; between them and man, a far greater: and if the proportion hold on, between man and angels there should be yet a greater. ([81]) We do not comprehend their natures, who retain the first definition of Porphyry, and distinguish them from ourselves by immortality; for before his fall, it is thought man also was immortal; yet must we needs affirm that he had a different

([81]) This idea of a chain of existence, descending from the throne of God to the minutest insect, has been developed with a singular luxuriance of poetry by Pope, in his Essay on Man:—

> "See, through this air, this ocean, and this earth,
> All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
> Above, how high progressive life may go!
> Around, how wide, how deep extend below!
> Vast chain of being, which from God began,
> Natures ethereal, human angel, man,
> Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
> No glass can reach; from infinite to thee,
> From thee to nothing."

Much has been said respecting the origin of this philosophical poem, inferior to no work of its kind, saving that of Lucretius: but few, perhaps, have detected,—none have pointed out,—the place where its true germ is to be found. It might, however, be *proved*, I think, that its origin is traceable to Montaigne's "Apologie pour Raymond de Sebonde," where the same attempt is made, and, for aught I know, with the same design, to humble the pride of man by exaggerating his defects, by exalting the inferior creation, and by instituting a terrible comparison between his greatest works, and the overwhelming grandeur and magnificence of the universe. In this diatribe of the old Perigordian, occur numerous passages of surpassing elegance and beauty. In his vehemence against human pride, in the picture he draws of human folly, in his apotheosis of instinct, in his elaborate delineation of human weakness, he furnishes a magnificent example of how grand and glorious man can be, even while descanting on his own humility.—Ed.

essence from the angels; having therefore no certain knowledge of their natures, it is no bad method of the schools, whatsoever perfection we find obscurely in ourselves, in a more complete and absolute way to ascribe unto them. I believe they have an extemporary knowledge, and upon the first motion of their reason do what we cannot without study or deliberation; that they know things by their forms, and define by specifical difference what we describe by accidents and properties; and therefore probabilities to us may be demonstrations unto them: that they have knowledge not only of the specifical, but numerical forms of individuals, and understand by what reserved difference each single hypostasis (besides the relation to its species) becomes its numerical self. That as the soul hath power to move the body it informs, so there is a faculty to move any, though inform none; ours upon restraint of time, place, and distance; but that invisible hand that conveyed Habakkuk to the lions' den, or Philip to Azotos, infringeth this rule, and hath a secret conveyance, wherewith mortality is not acquainted. If they have that intuitive knowledge, whereby as in reflection they behold the thoughts of one another, I cannot peremptorily deny but they know a great part of ours. They that to refute the invocation of saints, have denied that they have any knowledge of our affairs below, have proceeded too far, and must pardon my opinion, till I can thoroughly answer that piece of Scripture, "At the conversion of a sinner the angels in heaven rejoice." I cannot

with those in that great Father securely interpret the work of the first day, *fiat lux*, to the creation of angels, ([82]) though I confess there is not any creature that hath so near a glimpse of their nature, as light in the sun and elements. We style it a bare accident, but where it subsists alone it is a spiritual substance, and may be an angel: in brief, conceive light invisible, and that is a spirit.

These are certainly the magisterial and masterpieces of the Creator, the flower, or (as we may say) the best part of nothing, actually existing, what we are but in hopes, and probability; we are only that amphibious piece between a corporeal and spiritual essence, that middle form that links those two together, and makes good the method of God and nature, that jumps not from extremes, but unites the incompatible distances by some middle and participating natures. That we are the breath and similitude of God, it is indisputable, and upon record of holy Scripture; but to call ourselves a microcosm, or little world, ([83]) I thought it only

([82]) "Let there be light—and the light was:" an expression very judiciously enumerated by Longinus among the most sublime in literature.—Ed.

([83]) We have here a dogma of the stoics, which, from its striking character became current in the ancient world. Philo Judæus relates it as a common saying: Βραχὺν μὲν κόσμον τὸν ἄνθρωπον, μεγαν δε ἄνθρωπον τὸν κόσμον εἶναι. (Quis Divin. Action. Hæres.) Macrobius (II. In Somn. Scipion, c. 12.) makes use of nearly the same words: "Physici mundum magnum hominem dixerunt; et hominem brevem mundum." And what, as Lipsius observes, was the reason of this opinion? It was this—that as the universe is animated by the Spirit of God,

> "All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body nature is, and God the soul;"—

so man's body is animated by his intellectual soul. Again,

a pleasant trope of rhetoric, till my near judgment and second thoughts told me there was a real truth therein: for first we are a rude mass, and in the rank of creatures, which only are, and have a dull kind of being not yet privileged with life, or preferred to sense or reason; next we live the life of plants, the life of animals, the life of men, and at last the life of spirits, running in one mysterious nature those five kinds of existences, which comprehend the creatures not only of the world, but of the universe; thus is man that great and true amphibium, whose nature is disposed to live not only like other creatures in divers elements, but in divided and distinguished worlds: for though there be but one to sense, there are two to reason; the one visible, the other invisible, whereof Moses seems to have left description, and of the other so obscurely, that some parts thereof are yet in controversy. And truly for the first chapters of Genesis, I must confess a great deal of obscurity; though divines have to the power of human reason endeavoured to make go in a literal meaning, yet all those allegorical interpretations are also probable, and perhaps the mystical method of Moses, bred up in the hieroglyphical schools of the Egyptians. ([84])

---

nearly every part of the world has its representative in the human frame; for the head is as heaven, of which the eyes are the stars; we consist of the four elements; in the womb we are curled up into a ball; and, when we stretch out our arms, a line drawn around us would be a circle. For the remainder of the parallel, vid. Physiol. Stoicor. III. 2. 967.—Ed.

([84]) Lipsius, whose learning nourished the philosophy of Mon-

Now, for that immaterial world, methinks we need not wander so far as beyond the first moveable; for even in this material fabric the spirits walk as freely exempt from the affection of time, place, and motion, as beyond the extremest circumference. Do but extract from the corpulency of bodies, or resolve things beyond their first matter, and you discover the habitation of angels; which if I call the ubiquitary and omnipresent essence of God, I hope I shall not offend divinity: for before the creation of the world God was really all things. For the angels he created no new world, or determinate mansion, and therefore they are everywhere where is his essence, and do live at a distance even in himself. That God made all things for man, is in some sense true, yet not so far as to subordinate the creation of those purer creatures unto ours, though as ministering spirits they do, and are willing to fulfil the will of God in these lower and sublunary affairs of man. God made all things for himself, and it is impossible he should make them for any other end than his own glory; it is all he can receive, and all that is without himself: for honour being an external adjunct, and in the honourer rather than in the person honoured, it was necessary to make a creature from

taigne, remarks, that the Egyptians were already celebrated in the remotest antiquity for the learning and piety of their priests. This the sacred Scriptures themselves testify, where they relate that Moses was instructed in all the learning of the Egyptians; nor would they thus have spoken of their acquirements, but they considered them in some degree meritorious. Manuduct. ad Stoic. Philos. I. 5. 636.—Ed.

whom he might receive his homage, and that is, in the other world, angels; in this, man: which when we neglect, we forget the very end of our creation, and may justly provoke God, not only to repent that he hath made the world, but that he hath sworn he would not destroy it. That there is but one world is a conclusion of faith. Aristotle, with all his philosophy, hath not been able to prove it, and, as weakly, that the world was eternal. ([55]) That dispute much troubled the pen of the philosophers, but Moses decided that question, and all is salved with the new term of a creation, that is, a production of something out of nothing; and what is that? Whatsoever is opposite to something; or more exactly, that which is truly contrary unto God. For he only is, all others have an existence with dependency, and are sometime but by a distinction; and herein is Divinity conformant unto philosophy, and generation not only founded on contrarieties, but also creation; God

([55]) That Sir Thomas Browne was intimately acquainted with the philosophy of Aristotle I have some doubt. He appears to have taken for his the tract *De Mundo*, now well known to be by a more modern writer; and generally, where he mentions the philosopher, dwells on some obvious tenet of the Peripatetic school, with which very moderate reading might have made him familiar. With respect to the eternity of matter we have nothing positive delivered in Scripture, where the previous existence of a chaos appears to be implied:—"And the earth was without form and void:"—and in this sense Milton understood it, speaking of chaos as

> ——"The womb of nature,
> And perhaps her grave!"

Conf. Lips. Physiol. Stoicor. II. 20. 950, ff.—Ed.

being all things, is contrary unto nothing, out of which were made all things, and so nothing became something, and omneity informed nullity into an essence. ([86])

The whole creation is a mystery, and particularly that of man. At the blast of His mouth were the rest of the creatures made, and at His bare word they started out of nothing: but in the frame of man (as the text describes it,) he played the sensible operator, and seemed not so much to create, as make him. When he had separated the materials of other creatures, there consequently resulted a form and soul; but having raised the walls of man, he was driven to a second and harder creation of a substance like himself, an incorruptible and immortal soul. For these two affections we have the philosophy and opinion of the heathens, the flat affirmative of Plato, and not a negative from Aristotle. There is another scruple cast in by Divinity (concerning its production) much disputed in the German auditories, and with that indifferency and equality of arguments, as leave the controversy undetermined. I am not of Paracelsus's mind, that boldly delivers a receipt to make a man without conjunction;([87]) yet cannot but wonder at the mul-

([86]) A ludicrous example of philosophical jargon, not uncommon in Sir Thomas Browne.—Ed.

([87]) Upon the hint here dropped, or on the original passage in Paracelsus, the novel of "Frankenstein," I presume, was constructed. Arrogance such as this mad German s would surprise us, if, in such speculators, any degree of arrogance could. He should have been required to reduce his theory to practice. The undertaking would have been somewhat more difficult than

titude of heads that do deny traduction, having no other argument to confirm their belief, than that rhetorical sentence, and antimetathesis of Augustine, *Creando infunditur, infundendo creatur.* Either opinion will consist well enough with religion; yet I should rather incline to this, did not one objection haunt me, not wrung from speculations and subtleties, but from common sense and observation; not picked from the leaves of any author, but bred amongst the weeds and tares of mine own brain. And this is a conclusion from the equivocal and monstrous productions in the copulation of a man with a beast; for if the soul of man be not transmitted, and transfused in the seed of the parents, why are not those productions merely beasts, but have also an impression and tincture of reason in as high a measure, as it can evidence itself in those improper organs? Nor truly can I peremptorily deny, that the soul in this, her sublunary estate, is wholly, and in all acceptions inorganical; but that, for the performance of her ordinary actions, there is required not only a symmetry and proper disposition of organs, but a crasis and temper correspondent to its operations. Yet is not this mass of flesh and visible structure the instrument and proper corps of the soul, but rather of sense, and that the hand of reason. In our study of anatomy there is a mass of mysterious philosophy, and such as reduced the very heathens to divinity; yet amongst all those rare discourses, and curious pieces I find

---

his who taught how, on the top of arid mountains, artificial springs might be made. (Bacon Sylva Sylvarum. I. 25.)—Ed.

in the fabric of man, I do not so much content myself, as in that I find not there is no organ or instrument for the rational soul: for in the brain, which we term the seat of reason, there is not any thing of moment more than I can discover in the cranium of a beast: and this is a sensible and no inconsiderable argument of the inorganity of the soul, at least in that sense we usually so conceive it. Thus we are men, and we know not how; there is something in us that can be without us, and will be after us, though it is strange that it hath no history what it was before us, nor cannot tell how it entered in us. ([88])

Now, for these walls of flesh, wherein the soul doth seem to be immured, before the resurrection, it is nothing but an elemental composition, and a fabric that must fall to ashes. "All flesh is grass," is not only metaphorically but literally true; for all those creatures we behold, are but the herbs of

([88]) The doctrine of the pre-existence of souls is very old, and was once fashionable. Every one is acquainted with the peculiar tenets of Pythagoras, who sought by poetical fables to establish a philosophical vision. He could do all that Sir Thomas here requires, and tell what his soul had been employed about for half a dozen generations before it arrived at the body it then occupied. Ovid. Metamorph. xv. 60. ff. Other philosophers, too, foolishly repugnant to suppose the divine particle to be transmitted from father to son, agreed to invent a kind of spiritual nursery, whence a soul, like an Athenian cleruchos, was sent forth as often as a new colony was opened for its reception. "Pythagorici et Stoici cum timerent argumentum illud, quo colligitur necesse esse ut occidant animæ cum corporibus, quia cum corporibus nascuntur; dixerunt, non *nasci* animas, sed *insinuari* potius in corpora." (*Lactant.* III. 18.)—Ed.

the field, digested into flesh in them, or more remotely carnified in ourselves. Nay, further, we are what we all abhor, anthropophagi and cannibals, devourers not only of men, but of ourselves; and that not in an allegory, but a positive truth: for all this mass of flesh which we behold came in at our mouths; this frame we look upon hath been upon our trenchers; in brief, we have devoured ourselves.([89]) I cannot believe the wisdom of Pythagoras did ever positively, and in a literal sense, affirm his metempsychosis, or impossible transmigration of the souls of men into beasts. Of all the metamorphoses, or transmigrations, I believe only one, that is of Lot's wife; for that of Nebuchadnezzar proceeded not so far; in all others I conceive there is no further verity than is contained in their implicit sense and morality. I believe that the whole frame of a beast doth perish, and is left in the same state after death as before it was materialled unto life; that the souls of men know neither contrary nor corruption; that they subsist beyond the body, and outlive death by the privilege of their proper natures, and without a miracle; that the souls of the faithful, as they leave earth, take possession of heaven; that those apparitions and ghosts of departed persons are not the wandering souls of men, but the unquiet walks of devils, prompting and suggesting us unto mischief, blood, and villany, instilling and stealing into our hearts; that the blessed spirits are not at rest in their graves,

([89]) A very quaint, but striking and true remark.— Ed.

but wander solicitous of the affairs of the world; but that those phantasms appear often, and do frequent cemeteries, charnel-houses, and churches, it is because those are the dormitories of the dead, where the devil, like an insolent champion, beholds with pride the spoils and trophies of his victory over Adam.(90)

This is that dismal conquest we all deplore, that makes us so often cry, O Adam, *quid fecisti?* I thank God I have not those strait ligaments, or narrow obligations to the world, as to dote on life, or be convulsed and tremble at the name of death. Not that I am insensible of the dread and horror thereof, or by raking into the bowels of the deceased, continual sight of anatomies, skeletons, or cadaverous relics, like vespilloes, or grave-makers, I am become stupid, or have forgot the apprehension of mortality; but that marshalling all the horrors, and contemplating the extremities thereof, I find not anything therein able to daunt the courage of a man, much less a well-resolved Christian. And therefore am not angry at the error of our first parents, or unwilling to bear a part of this common fate, and like the best of them to die, that is, to cease to breathe, to take a farewell of the ele-

(90) The belief in ghosts appears to be as old and as widespread as the human race. The mountains, and glens, and solitary places of Greece were haunted like our own; but we have probably improved upon them in the mythology of churchyards and charnel-houses. In Crete, however, and other islands of the Mediterranean, the katakhanas, or vampire, of modern times, surpasses our own goblins in horrid interest. See Pashley's Travels in Crete. vol. ii. p. 196.—Ed.

ments, to be a kind of nothing for a moment, to be within one instant of a spirit. When I take a full view and circle of myself, without this reasonable moderator and equal piece of justice, death, I do conceive myself the miserablest person extant. Were there not another life that I hope for, all the vanities of this world should not entreat a moment's breath for me; could the devil work my belief to imagine I could never die, I would not outlive that very thought; I have so abject a conceit of this common way of existence, this retaining to the sun and elements, I cannot think this is to be a man, or to live according to the dignity of humanity. In expectation of a better, I can with patience embrace this life, yet in my best meditations do often desire death. I honour any man that contemns it,([91]) nor can I highly love any that is

([91]) We have here a species of that inactive melancholy which Burton anatomizes, and Byron, energetic as he was, at times felt. In the exhaustion of animal spirits consequent upon a too free indulgence of the passions, life may appear insipid even to the most hale and vigorous minds; but habitual nausea of existence, when actually felt, is a disease, arising from a feeble stamina. Bacon, though not unable to look death in the face, was deeply enamoured of life, and had recourse to every variety of artificial means to extend its span. And this is a natural and healthy feeling. Fits of chill despondency most men know, and in one of these Byron poured forth that *Euthanasia*, which concludes thus:—

> "Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
> Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
> And know, whatever thou hast been,
> 'Tis something better *not to be!*"

He had, no doubt, in his eye the gloomy calculation of the old Khalif, who, after reigning God knows how many years, professed to have known but fourteen happy days. Gibbon, after relating the anecdote, observes that he had known many more,

afraid of it: this makes me naturally love a soldier, and honour those tattered and contemptible regiments, that will die at the command of a sergeant. For a pagan there may be some motives to be in love with life; but for a Christian to be amazed at death, I see not how he can escape this dilemma, that he is too sensible of this life, or hopeless of the life to come.

Some divines count Adam thirty years old at his creation, because they suppose him created in the perfect age and stature of man. And surely we are all out of the computation of our age, and every man is some months elder than he bethinks him; for we live, move, have a being, and are subject to the actions of the elements, and the malice of diseases, in that other world, the truest microcosm, the womb of our mother. For besides that general and common existence we are conceived to hold in our chaos, and whilst we sleep within the bosom of our causes, we enjoy a being and life in three distinct worlds, wherein we receive most manifest graduations. In that obscure world and womb of our mother, our time is short, computed by the moon; yet longer than the days of many creatures that behold the sun, ourselves bein gnot yet without life, sense, and reason; though for the manifestation of its actions, it awaits the opportu-

---

for some of which he was indebted to the writing of his history. (Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. X. 40.) No doubt: whoever is happy, owes much of it to assiduous employment. The idle only are truly miserable. (See Montaigne, Essais, liv. I. chap. 19.)—Ed.

nity of objects, and seems to live there but in its root and soul of vegetation. Entering afterwards upon the scene of the world, we arise up and become another creature, performing the reasonable actions of man, and obscurely manifesting that part of divinity in us, but not in compliment and perfection till we have once more cast our secondine, that is, this slough of flesh, and are delivered into the last world, that is, that ineffable place of Paul, that proper *ubi* of spirits. The smattering I have of the philosopher's stone (which is something more than the perfect exaltation of gold) hath taught me a great deal of divinity, and instructed my belief, how that immortal spirit, and incorruptible substance of my soul may lie obscure, and sleep awhile within this house of flesh. Those strange and mystical transmigrations that I have observed in silk-worms, turned my philosophy into divinity. There is in these works of nature, which seem to puzzle reason, something divine, and hath more in it than the eye of a common spectator doth discover.([92])

I am naturally bashful, nor hath conversation, age, or travel, been able to effront or enharden me; yet I have one part of modesty which I have seldom discovered in another, that is, (to speak truly,) I

([92]) I would that all studies had this end!—But many of us appear to be led by our philosophy as far as possible from religion. Assuredly in learning,

> "Too scanty draughts intoxicate the brain:
> And drinking largely sobers us again."

ED.

am not so much afraid of death, as ashamed thereof. It is the very disgrace and ignominy of our natures, that in a moment can so disfigure us, that our nearest friends, wife and children([93]) stand afraid and start at us. The birdsand beasts of the field, that before in a natural fear obeyed us, forgetting all allegiance, begin to prey upon us. This very conceit hath in a tempest disposed and left me willing to be swallowed up in the abyss of waters; wherein I had perished unseen, unpitied, without wondering eyes, tears of pity, lectures of mortality, and none had said, *Quantum mutatus ab illo!* Not that I am ashamed of the anatomy of my parts, or can accuse nature for playing the bungler in any part of me, or my own vicious life for contracting any shameful disease upon me, whereby I might not call myself as wholesome a morsel for the worms as any.

Some, upon the courage of a fruitful issue, wherein, as in the truest chronicle, they seem to

---

([93]) And yet, who has not witnessed the terrible beauty of death? who has not, in some degree, felt, what poetry only can describe?

"He who hath bent him o'er the dead
Ere the first day of death is fled,
The first dark day of nothingness,
The last of danger and distress,
(Before Decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers,)
And marked the mild angelic air,
The rapture of repose that's there——,
And, but for that sad shrouded eye,
That fires not, wins not, weeps not now,
And, but for that chill changeless brow—
Yes, but for these, and these alone,
Some moments, aye, one treacherous hour,
He still might doubt the tyrant's power."—BYRON.

ED.

outlive themselves, can with greater patience away with death. This conceit and counterfeit subsisting in our progenies, seems to be a mere fallacy, unworthy the desires of a man, that can but conceive a thought of the next world; who, in a nobler ambition should desire to live in his substance in heaven, rather than his name and shadow in the earth. And therefore at my death I mean to take a total adieu of the world, not caring for a monument, history, or epitaph, not so much as the memory of my name([94]) to befound anywhere, but in the universal register of God. I am not yet so cynical, as to approve the testament([95]) of Diogenes, nor do I altogether allow that rhodomontade of Lucan;

——— Cœlo tegitur, qui non habet urnam.

He that unburied lies wants not his hearse,
For unto him a tomb's the universe;

but commend, in my calmer judgment, those ingenuous intentions that desire to sleep by the urns of their fathers, and strive to go the nearest way

([94]) Upon this it will suffice to recall the remark of that ancient author, who said he had always noticed that philosophers put their names to the works which they wrote on the contempt of fame; which was the case also with Sir Thomas Browne. Apart from affectation, the confession of our great contemporary poet might be made by every man who meddles with composition:—

"I too would be remembered in my line,
With my land's language."

ED.

([95]) Who willed his friend not to bury him, but hang him up with a staff in his hand, to fright away the crows.

unto corruption. I do not envy the temper of crows and daws, nor the numerous and weary days of our fathers before the flood. If there be any truth in astrology, I may outlive a jubilee. As yet I have not seen one revolution of Saturn, nor hath my pulse beat thirty years;([96]) and yet, excepting one, have seen the ashes, and left under-ground, all the kings of Europe; have been contemporary to three emperors, four grand signors, and as many popes. Methinks I have outlived myself, and begin to be weary of the sun; I have shaken hands with delight. In my warm blood and canicular days, I perceive I do anticipate the vices of age; the world to me is but a dream or mock show, and we all therein but pantaloons and antics, to my severer contemplations.([97])

It is not, I confess, an unlawful prayer to desire to surpass the days of our Saviour, or wish to outlive that age wherein he thought fittest to die; yet if (as divinity affirms) there shall be no grey hairs in heaven, but all shall rise in the perfect state of

([96]) That is, he was not thirty years old when the first rough draught of this work was thrown upon paper; but he had advanced considerably beyond that age, I believe, before it saw the light.—Ed.

([97]) In the mouth of Diogenes, ensconsed in his tub, this would not have sounded amiss; but, though the author professes to have grown old before his time, it excites a smile to hear a young physician under thirty boasting of having "shaken hands with delight," and of the world's being "but a dream, or mock show," to his "severer judgment." He lived, we know, to be on better terms with the world, to taste of much delight, and to discover that, among mankind, there are some who should not be esteemed mere *pantaloons*.—Ed.

men, we do but outlive those perfections in this world, to be recalled unto them by a greater miracle in the next, and run on here but to be retrograde hereafter. Were there any hopes to outlive vice, or a point to be superannuated from sin, it were worthy our knees to implore the days of Methuselah. But age doth not rectify, but incurvate our natures, turning bad dispositions into worser habits, and (like diseases) bringing on incurable vices; for every day as we grow weaker in age, we grow stronger in sin; and the number of our days doth but make our sins innumerable. The same vice committed at sixteen, is not the same, though it agrees in all other circumstances, as at forty, but swells and doubles from that circumstance of our ages, wherein, besides the constant and inexcusable habit of transgressing, the maturity of our judgment cuts off pretence unto excuse or pardon; every sin the oftener it is committed, the more it acquireth in the quality of evil; as it succeeds in time, so it proceeds in degrees of badness; for as they proceed they ever multiply, and, like figures in arithmetic, the last stands for more than all that went before it. And though I think no man can live well once, but he that could live twice, yet for my own part I would not live over my hours past, or begin again the thread of my days: not upon Cicero's ground, because I have lived them well, but for fear I should live them worse. I find my growing judgment daily instruct me how to be better, but my untamed affections and confirmed vitiosity makes me daily do worse.

I find in my confirmed age the same sins I discovered in my youth; I committed many then because I was a child, and because I commit them still, I am yet an infant. Therefore I perceive a man may be twice a child before the days of dotage, and stand in need of Æson's bath before threescore.

And truly there goes a great deal of providence to produce a man's life unto threescore; there is more required than an able temper for those years; though the radical humour contain in it sufficient oil for seventy, yet I perceive in some it gives no light past thirty: men assign not all the causes of long life, that write whole books thereof.(98) They

(98) Perhaps not; yet in Lord Bacon's "History of Life and Death," the reader will find a tolerably long list of causes, together with numerous examples of men who have attained to a very great old age. An instance has just occurred in Scotland, where a poor man, by name John Gordon, died in the beginning of this winter at the age of one hundred and thirty-two, having, up to the last year of his life, been able to work in the garden, while his sons and grandson, who dwelt with him, had been reduced to stocking-knitting, and other in-door occupations. In England itself we have had extraordinary instances of longevity; Henry Jenkins, a Welshman lived to the age of one hundred and sixty-nine; and it is clear to me that old Parr, who died at the age of one hundred and fifty-two, would have lived much longer, had he not been brought to London, and induced to change his manner of life. See the account of his circumstances and death in Harvey's works. In the beginning of the seventeenth century, a May game, or Morris-dance, was performed, at some village in Herefordshire, by eight men, whose united ages amounted to eight hundred years, though among them some were more than a hundred and others less. Northern countries have generally been supposed most favourable to long life, though among the Yoghis of Hindûstan many attain an age

that found themselves on the radical balsam, or vital sulphur of the parts, determine not why Abel lived not so long as Adam. There is therefore a secret glome or bottom of our days; it was His wisdom to determine them, but his perpetual and waking providence that fulfils and accomplishes them; wherein the spirits, ourselves, and all the creatures of God in a secret and disputed way do execute his will. Let them not therefore complain of immaturity that die about thirty: they fall but like the whole world, whose solid and well-composed substance must not expect the duration and period of its constitution: when all things are completed in it, its age is accomplished; and the last and general fever may as naturally destroy it before six thousand, as me before forty. There is therefore some other hand that twines the thread of life than that of nature: we are not only ignorant in antipathies and occult qualities; our ends are as obscure as our beginnings; the line of our days

not exceeded by any Hyperborean whatever. Instances have there been said to occur of men two hundred years old. Aristotle, to whom similar facts were probably known, concluded accordingly, that southern countries enjoyed in this respect the advantage; and the example of the Ethiopians has been adduced by other writers. Upon the whole, however, the greater number of testimonies are in favour of the north. This was the opinion of Hippocrates (De Aëre et Locis, &c. §. 19.); and his able and learned commentator, Coray, brings forward numerous facts in support of the Coan's views. (tom. II. p. 56. ff.) Buffon speaks of a Swede who lived to be one hundred and sixty-one; (Hist. Nat. III. 443.) and Peter Czartin, the Hungarian, towards the close of the eighteenth century, reached the truly patriarchal age of one hundred and eighty-five. (Com. de Reb. in Scient. Nat. et Med. Gestis. V. 147.)—Ed.

is drawn by night, and the various effects therein by a pencil that is invisible; wherein, though we confess our ignorance, I am sure we do not err if we say it is the hand of God.

I am much taken with two verses of Lucan, since I have been able, not only as we do at school, to construe, but understand.

> Victurosque Dei celant ut vivere durent,
> Felix esse mori.
>
> We're all deluded, vainly searching ways
> To make us happy by the length of days;
> For cunningly to make 's protract this breath,
> The gods conceal the happiness of death.

There be many excellent strains in that poet, wherewith his stoical genius hath liberally supplied him: and truly there are singular pieces in the philosophy of Zeno, and doctrine of the stoics, which I perceive, delivered in a pulpit, pass for current divinity. ([99]) Yet herein are they in extremes, that can allow a man to be his own assassin, and so highly extol the end and suicide of Cato: this is indeed not to fear death, but yet to be afraid of life. It is a brave act of valour to contemn death; but where life is more terrible than death, it is then the truest valour to dare to live; and herein religion hath taught us a noble example. For all the valiant acts of Curtius, Scævola, or Codrus, do not parallel or match that one of Job; and sure there is no torture to the rack of a disease, nor any poni-

([99]) And why not? Truth is not the less true, for having been taught by Zeno.—Ed.

ards in death itself, like those in the way or prologue to it. *Emori nolo, sed me esse mortuum nihil curo;* I would not die, but care not to be dead. Were I of Cæsar's religion, I should be of his desires, and wish rather to go off at one blow, than to be sawed in pieces by the grating torture of a disease. Men that look no further than their outsides, think health an appurtenance unto life, and quarrel with their constitutions for being sick; but I that have examined the parts of man, and know upon what tender filaments that fabric hangs, do wonder that we are not always so; and considering the thousand doors that lead to death, do thank my God that we can die but once. ([100]) It is not only the mischief of diseases, and villany of poisons, that make an end of us: we vainly accuse the fury of guns, and the new inventions of death; it is in the power of every hand to destroy us, and we are beholden unto every one we meet he doth not kill us. There is, therefore, but one comfort left, that though it be in the power of the weakest arm to take away life, it is not in the strongest to deprive us of death: God would not exempt himself from that, the misery of immortality in the flesh; he undertook not that was immortal. Certainly there is no happiness within this circle of flesh, nor is it in the optics of these eyes to behold felicity; the first day of our jubilee is death; the devil hath

([100]) So evidently did the Psalmist, when, in the verse already quoted, he exclaimed, "I am *fearfully* and wonderfully made." —Ed.

therefore failed of his desires; we are happier with death, than we should have been without it There is no misery but in himself, where there is no end of misery; and so indeed in his own sense, the stoic is in the right. He forgets that he can die who complains of misery; we are in the power of no calamity while death is in our own.

Now, besides the literal and positive kind of death, there are others whereof divines make mention, and those I think, not merely metaphorical, as mortification, dying unto sin and the world; therefore, I say, every man hath a double horoscope, one of his humanity, his birth; another of his Christianity, his baptism, and from this do I compute or calculate my nativity; not reckoning those *horæ combustæ* and odd days, or esteeming myself anything, before I was my Saviour's, and enrolled in the register of Christ: whosoever enjoys not this life, I count him but an apparition, though he wear about him the sensible affections of flesh. In these moral acceptions, the way to be immortal is to die daily; nor can I think I have the true theory of death, when I contemplate a skull, or behold a skeleton with those vulgar imaginations it casts upon us; I have therefore enlarged that common *memento mori*, into a more Christian memorandum, *memento quatuor novissima*, those four inevitable points of us all, death, judgment, heaven, and hell. Neither did the contemplations of the heathens rest in their graves, without further thought of Rhadamanthos, or some judicial proceeding after death, though in another way, and upon

suggestion of their natural reasons. I cannot but marvel from what sibyl or oracle they stole the prophesy of the world's destruction by fire,([101]) or whence Lucan learned to say,

> Communis mundo superest rogus, ossibus astra
> Misturus.———
>
> There yet remains to th' world one common fire,
> Wherein our bones with stars shall make one pyre.

I believe the world grows near its end, yet is neither old nor decayed, nor shall ever perish upon the ruins of its own principles. As the work of creation was above nature, so its adversary annihilation; without which the world hath not its end, but its mutation. Now what force should be able to consume it thus far, without the breath of God, which is the truest consuming flame, my philosophy cannot inform me. Some believe there went not a minute to the world's creation, nor shall there go to its destruction: those six days so punctually de-

([101]) In what way soever they obtained the idea, the doctrine of the ἐκπύρωσις, or final conflagration of the universe, was extensively spread over the ancient world. It formed, indeed, part of a system, not unlike that of the Buddhists, which teaches that at certain periods of time, everything is reduced to its elements, and a new creation again effected. Now it is water, now fire, and now vast and mighty winds,

> Which sweep the world before them in their way!

Of the great deluge, the remembrance never wholly faded from the memory of men: and they believed that the next disorganization would be effected by the agency of fire. (Conf. Numen. ap. Euseb. et Lips. Physiol. Stoic. II. 22. 255.)

scribed, make not to them one moment, but rather seem to manifest the method and idea of the great work of the intellect of God, than the manner how he proceeded in its operation. I cannot dream that there should be at the last day any such judicial proceeding, or calling to the bar, as indeed the Scripture seems to imply, and the literal commentators do conceive. For unspeakable mysteries in the Scriptures are often delivered in a vulgar and illustrative way; and being written unto man, are delivered, not as they truly are, but as they may be understood; wherein, notwithstanding the different interpretations, according to different capacities, may stand firm with our devotion, nor be any way prejudicial to each single edification.

Now, to determine the day and the year of this inevitable time, is not only convincible and statute madness, but also manifest impiety. How shall we interpret Elias's six thousand years, or imagine the secret communicated to a rabbi, which God hath denied unto his angels? It had been an excellent query to have posed the devil of Delphi, and must needs have forced him to some strange amphibology; it hath not only mocked the predictions of sundry astrologers in ages past, but the prophecies of many melancholy heads in these present, who neither understanding reasonably things past or present, pretend a knowledge of things to come; heads ordained only to manifest the incredible effects of melancholy, and to fulfil old prophecies, rather than

be the authors of new. "In those days there shall come wars, and rumours of wars," ([102]) to me seems no prophecy, but a constant truth, in all times verified since it was pronounced. "There shall be signs in the moon and stars;" how comes he then like a thief in the night, when he gives an item of his coming? That common sign drawn from the revelation of Antichrist, is as obscure as any; in our common compute he hath been come these many years; but for my own part, to speak freely, I am half of opinion that Antichrist is the philosopher's stone in divinity; for the discovery and invention thereof, though there be prescribed rules, and probable inductions, yet hath hardly any man attained the perfect discovery thereof. That general opinion that the world grows near its end, hath possessed all ages past as nearly as ours; I am afraid that the souls that now depart, cannot escape that lingering expostulation of the saints under the altar, *Quousque Domine?* "How long, O Lord?" and groan in the expectation of that great jubilee.

This is the day that must make good that great attribute of God, his justice; that must reconcile those unanswerable doubts that torment the wisest understandings, and reduce those seeming inequalities, and respective distributions in this world, to an equality and recompensive justice in the next. This is that one day that shall include and comprehend all that went before it; wherein, as in the last scene, all the actors must enter, to complete and

([102]) "In those days there shall come liars and false prophets."

make up the catastrophe of this great piece. This is the day whose memory hath only power to make us honest in the dark, and to be virtuous without a witness. *Ipsa sui pretium virtus sibi,* that virtue is her own reward, is but a cold principle, and not able to maintain our variable resolutions, in a constant and settled way of goodness. I have practised that honest artifice of Seneca, and in my retired and solitary imaginations, to detain me from the foulness of vice, have fancied to myself the presence of my dear and worthiest friends, before whom I whould lose my head, rather than be vicious; yet herein I found that there was nought but moral honesty, and this was not to be virtuous for His sake, who must reward us at the last. I have tried if I could reach that great resolution of his, to be honest without a thought of heaven or hell; and indeed I found, upon a natural inclination, and inbred loyalty unto virtue, that I could serve her without a livery; yet not in that resolved and venerable way, but that the frailty of my nature, upon easy temptation, might be induced to forget her. The life, therefore, and spirit of all our actions, is the resurrection, and a stable apprehension that our ashes shall enjoy the fruit of our pious endeavours; without this, all religion is a fallacy, and those impieties of Lucian, Euripides, and Julian, are no blasphemies, but subtle verities, and atheists have been the only philosophers.

How shall the dead arise is no question of my faith; to believe only possibilities is not faith, but mere philosophy. Many things are true in divi-

nity, which are neither inducible by reason, nor confirmable by sense; and many things in philosophy confirmable by sense, yet not inducible by reason. Thus it is impossible, by any solid or demonstrative reasons, to persuade a man to believe the conversion of the needle to the north; though this be possible and true, and easily credible, upon a single experiment unto the sense. I believe that our estranged and divided ashes shall unite again; that our separated dust, after so many pilgrimages and transformations into the parts of minerals, plants, animals, elements, shall at the voice of God return into their primitive shapes, and join again to make up their primary and predestinate forms. As, at the creation, there was a separation of that confused mass into its pieces; so at the destruction thereof there shall be a separation into its distinct individuals. As, at the creation of the world, all the distinct species that we behold lay involved in one mass, till the fruitful voice of God separated this united multitude into its several species: so at the last day, when those corrupted relics shall be scattered in the wilderness of forms, and seem to have forgot their proper habits, God, by a powerful voice, shall command them back into their proper shapes, and call them out by their single individuals: then shall appear the fertility of Adam, and the magic of that sperm that hath dilated into so many millions. I have often beheld as a miracle that artificial resurrection and revivification of mercury, how being mortified into a thousand shapes, it assumes again its own, and re-

turns into its numerical self. Let us speak naturally, and like philosophers, the forms of alterable bodies in these sensible corruptions perish not; nor, as we imagine, wholly quit their mansions, but retire and contract themselves into their secret and unaccessible parts, where they may best protect themselves from the action of their antagonist. A plant or vegetable consumed to ashes, by a contemplative and school-philosopher seems utterly destroyed, and the form to have taken his leave for ever: but to a sensible artist the forms are not perished, but withdrawn into their incombustible part, where they lie secure from the action of that devouring element. This is made good by experience, which can from the ashes of a plant revive the plant, and from its cinders recal it into its stalk and leaves again. ([103]) What the art of man can do in these inferior pieces, what blasphemy is it to affirm the finger of God cannot do in those more perfect and sensible structures? This is that mystical philosophy from whence no true scholar becomes an atheist, but from the visible effects of nature grows up a real divine; and beholds, not in a dream, as Ezekiel, but in an ocular and visible object the types of his resurrection.

Now, the necessary mansions of our restored selves, are those two contrary and incompatible places we call heaven and hell; to define them, or

([103]) Is this so? I am not sufficiently versed in experimental philosophy to reply; but I disbelieve the assertion, though our country people, I know, will pretend, that if you burn fern, and scatter the ashes over the earth, young fern will spring up.—Ed.

strictly to determine what and where these are surpasseth my divinity. That elegant apostle which seemed to have a glimpse of heaven, hath left but a negative description thereof: "which neither eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard, nor can enter into the heart of man:" he was translated out of himself to behold it; but being returned into himself could not express it. St. John's description by emeralds, chrysolites, and precious stones, is too weak to express the material heaven we behold. Briefly, therefore, where the soul hath the full measure and complement of happiness; where the boundless appetite of that spirit remains completely satisfied, that it can neither desire addition nor alteration, that I think is truly heaven: and this can only be in the enjoyment of that essence, whose infinite goodness is able to terminate the desires of itself, and the insatiable wishes of ours; wherever God will thus manifest himself, there is heaven, though within the circle of this sensible world. Thus the soul of man may be in heaven anywhere, even within the limits of his own proper body; ([104]) and when it ceaseth to live in the body it may remain in its own soul, that is, its Creator. And thus we may say that St. Paul, whether in the body, or out of the body, was yet in heaven. To place it in the empyreal, or beyond the tenth sphere, is to forget the world's destruction;

([104]) Thus Milton, in poetical language, expresses a similar idea:

> "The soul is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."

ED.

for when this sensible world shall be destroyed, all shall then be here as it is now there, an empyreal heaven, a *quasi* vacuity; when to ask where heaven is, is to demand where the presence of God is, or where we have the glory of that happy vision. Moses, that was bred up in all the learning of the Egyptians, committed a gross absurdity in philosophy, when with these eyes of flesh he desired to see God, and petitioned his Maker, that is truth itself, to a contradiction. Those that imagine heaven and hell neighbours, and conceive a vicinity between those two extremes, upon consequence of the parable, where Dives discoursed with Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, do too grossly conceive of those glorified creatures, whose eyes shall easily outsee the sun, and behold without a perspective the extremest distances? for if there shall be in our glorified eyes the faculty of sight and reception of objects, I could think the visible species there to be in as unlimitable a way as now the intellectual. I grant that two bodies placed beyond the tenth sphere, or in a vacuity, according to Aristotle's philosophy, could not behold each other, because there wants a body or medium to hand and transport the visible rays of the object unto the sense; but when there shall be a general defect of either medium to convey, or light to prepare and dispose that medium, and yet a perfect vision, we must suspend the rules of our philosophy, and make all good by a more absolute piece of optics.

I cannot tell how to say that fire is the essence of hell. I know not what to make of pur-

gatory, or conceive a flame that can either prey upon, or purify the substance of a soul: those flames of sulphur mentioned in the Scriptures, I take not to be understood of this present hell, but of that to come, where fire shall make up the complement of our tortures, and have a body or subject wherein to manifest its tyranny. Some who have had the honour to be textuary in divinity, are of opinion it shall be the same specifical fire with ours. This is hard to conceive, yet can I make good how even that may prey upon our bodies, and yet not consume us: for in this material world, there are bodies that persist invincible in the powerfullest flames; and though by the action of fire they fall into ignition and liquation, yet will they never suffer a destruction. I would gladly know how Moses, with an actual fire, calcined or burnt the golden calf into powder: for that mystical metal of gold, whose solary and celestial nature I admire, exposed unto the violence of fire, grows only hot and liquifies, but consumeth not: so when the consumable and volatile pieces of our bodies shall be refined into a more impregnable and fixed temper, like gold, though they suffer from the actions of flames, they shall never perish, but lie immortal in the arms of fire. ([105]) And surely if this

([105]) A very splendid thought:—

"Confounded, though immortal."

This is a striking example of that melancholy habit which possessed the author, of haunting the limits of the unknown. Like Vathek, he seems to have burned with the desire of discovering

frame must suffer only by the action of this element, there will many bodies escape, and not only heaven but earth will not be at an end, but rather a beginning. For at present it is not earth, but a composition of fire, water, earth, and air; but at that time, spoiled of these ingredients, it shall appear in a substance more like itself, its ashes. Philosophers that opinioned the world's destruction by fire, did never dream of annihilation, which is beyond the power of sublunary causes; for the last action of that element is but vitrification, or a reduction of a body into glass; and therefore some of our chemists facetiously affirm, that at the last fire all shall be crystallized and reverberated into glass, which is the utmost action of that element. Nor need we fear this term, annihilation, or wonder that God will destroy the works of his creation: for man subsisting, who is, and will then truly appear a microcosm, the world cannot be said to be destroyed. For the eyes of God, and perhaps also of our glorified selves, shall as really behold and contemplate the world in its epitome or contracted essence, as now it doth at large and in its dilated substance. In the seed of a plant, to the eyes of God, and to the understanding of man, there ex-

---

what is hidden from us, more because it is hidden, than from any benefit which the knowing of it would confer. In my opinion, one of the wisest rules that can be observed in study, is to eschew those subjects which afford no footing to the mind; among which we must certainly reckon all speculations on the effects of the material elements on the soul, though we see that, in our present state, their influence extends to the innermost recesses of our spirits.—Ed.

ists, though in an invisible way, the perfect leaves, flowers, and fruit thereof: (for things that are in *posse* to the sense, are actually existent to the understanding.) Thus God beholds all things, who contemplates as fully his works in their epitome, as in their full volume; and beheld as amply the whole world in that little compendium of the sixth day, as in the scattered and dilated pieces of those five before.

Men commonly set forth the torments of hell by fire, and the extremity of corporeal afflictions, and describe hell in the same method that Mahomet doth heaven. This indeed makes a noise, and drums in popular ears: but if this be the terrible piece thereof, it is not worthy to stand in diameter with heaven, whose happiness consists in that part that is best able to comprehend it, that immortal essence, that translated divinity and colony of God, the soul. Surely, though we place hell under earth, the devil's walk and purlieu is about it: men speak too popularly who place it in those flaming mountains, which to grosser apprehensions represent hell. The heart of man is the place the devils dwell in:([106]) I feel sometimes a hell within myself; Lucifer keeps his court in my breast; Legion is revived in me. There are as many hells as Anaxagoras conceited worlds: there was more than one hell in Magdalene, when there were seven devils; for every devil is a hell unto himself: he holds enough of torture in his own *ubi*, and needs not the

([106]) "The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."—Ed.

misery of circumference to afflict him. And thus, a distracted conscience here is a shadow or introduction unto hell hereafter. Who can but pity the merciful intention of those hands that do destroy themselves? The devil, were it in his power, would do the like; which being impossible, his miseries are endless, and he suffers most in that attribute wherein he is impassible—his immortality.

I thank God that (with joy I mention it) I was never afraid of hell, nor never grew pale at the description of that place: I have so fixed my contemplations on heaven that I have almost forgot the idea of hell, and am afraid rather to lose the joys of the one, than endure the misery of the other—to be deprived of them is a perfect hell, and needs, methinks, no addition to complete our afflictions: that terrible term hath never detained me from sin, nor do I owe any good action to the name thereof. ([107]) I fear God, yet

([107]) Perhaps Sir Thomas Browne had not yet sufficiently studied his own heart; he might otherwise have found the motive he here disparages lurking at the bottom of many an action apparently traceable to a very different source.—Ignorance only can excuse men for thus disparaging the wisdom of their Creator; for, if by implanting the fear of future punishment in the human breast, he designed to produce salutary effects, to say that it produces no such effects is to claim something like an independence of the Deity. On this ground alone can we excuse Burns, who says,

> "The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
> To haud the wretch in order;
> But where ye feel your *honour* grip,
> Let that be aye your border!"

Honour, forsooth! Philosophy, to say nothing of religion, would have quickly convinced him that *honour*, as honour has always been understood in the world, is no check to truly disho-

am not afraid of him; his mercies make me ashamed of my sins, before his judgments afraid thereof. These are the forced and secondary methods of his wisdom, which he useth but as the last remedy, and upon provocation; a course rather to deter the wicked, than incite the virtuous to his worship. I can hardly think there was ever any scared into heaven: they go the fairest way to heaven that would serve God without a hell. Other mercenaries that crouch unto him, in fear of hell, though they term themselves the servants, are indeed but the slaves of the Almighty.

And, to be true, and speak my soul, when I survey the occurrences of my life, and call into account the finger of God, I can perceive nothing but an abyss and mass of mercies, either in general to mankind, or in particular to myself: and whether out of the prejudice of my affection, or an inverting and partial conceit of his mercies, I know not; but those which others term crosses, afflictions, judgments, misfortunes, to me, who inquire further into them than their visible effects, they both appear, and in event have ever proved the secret and dissembled favours of his affection. It is a singular piece of wisdom to apprehend truly, and without passion, the works of God; and so well to distinguish his justice from his mercy, as not to miscall those noble attributes: yet it is likewise an honest piece of logic, so to dispute and argue the

nourable actions. The most honourable man will, under certain circumstances, utter falsehood; but would forthwith murder any friend who should venture to tell him so.—Ed.

proceedings of God, as to distinguish even his judgments into mercies. ([108]) For God is merciful unto all, because better to the worst than the best deserve; and to say he punisheth none in this world, though it be a paradox, is no absurdity. To one that hath committed murder, if the judge should only ordain a fine, it were a madness to call this a punishment, and to repine at the sentence rather than admire the clemency of the judge. Thus our offences being mortal, and deserving not only death, but damnation; if the goodness of God be content to traverse and pass them over with a loss, misfortune, or disease, what frensy were it to term this a punishment, rather than an extremity of mercy; and to groan under the rod of his judgments, rather than admire the sceptre of his mercies! Therefore to adore, honour, and admire him is a debt of gratitude due from the obligation of our nature, states, and conditions; and with these thoughts, he that knows them best will not deny that I adore him. That I obtain heaven, and the bliss thereof, is accidental, and not the intended work of my devotion; it being a felicity I can neither think to deserve, nor scarce in modesty to expect. For those two ends of us all, either as rewards or punishments, are mercifully ordained and disproportionably disposed unto our actions; the one being so far beyond our deserts, the other so infinitely below our demerits.

([108]) This was the design of the Paradise Lost:

> "To vindicate eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to man."—ED.

There is no salvation to those that believe not in Christ, that is, say some, since his nativity, and as divinity affirmeth, before also ; which makes me much apprehend the ends of those honest worthies and philosophers which died before his incarnation. It is hard to place those souls in hell whose worthy lives do teach us virtue on earth : methinks amongst those many subdivisions of hell, there might have been one limbo left for these. What a strange vision will it be to see their poetical fictions converted into verities, and their imagined and fancied furies into real devils ! How strange to them will sound the history of Adam, when they shall suffer for him they never heard of ! When they who derive their genealogy from the gods, shall know they are the unhappy issue of sinful man ! It is an insolent part of reason to controvert the works of God, or question the justice of his proceedings. Could humility teach others, as it hath instructed me, to contemplate the infinite and incomprehensible distance betwixt the Creator and the creature ; or did we seriously perpend that one simile of St. Paul, " Shall the vessel say to the potter, Why hast thou made me thus ?" it would prevent these arrogant disputes of reason, nor would we argue the definitive sentence of God, either to heaven, or hell. Men that live according to the right rule and law of reason, live but in their own kind, as beasts do in theirs; who justly obey the prescript of their natures, and therefore cannot reasonably demand a reward of their actions, as only obeying the natural dictates of their reason. It will therefore,

and must at last appear, that all salvation is through Christ: which verity I fear these great examples of virtue must confirm, and make it good, how the perfectest actions of earth have no title or claim unto heaven.

Nor truly do I think the lives of these, or of any other were ever correspondent, or in all points conformable unto their doctrines. It is evident that Aristotle transgressed the rule of his own ethics. The stoics that condemn passion, and command a man to laugh in Phalaris's bull, could not endure without a groan a fit of the stone or cholic.([109]) The sceptics, that affirmed they knew nothing, even in that opinion confute themselves, and thought they knew more than all the world beside. Diogenes, I hold to be the most vain-glorious man of his time,([110]) and more ambitious in refusing all honours, than Alexander in rejecting none. Vice and the devil put a fallacy upon our reasons, and provoking us too hastily to run from it, entangle and profound

([109]) Shakspeare, who has painted most varieties of human folly, has not omitted this:

> "Was never yet philosopher
> That could endure the tooth-ache patiently,
> However they have writ the style of gods,
> And made a pish of chance and sufferance."—Ed.

([110]) That he should have been more vain-glorious than Alexander was impossible. The character of Diogenes has remained an enigma to this day, notwithstanding all that has been said and written concerning him. It is not, therefore, to be developed in a note; but they who would comprehend the position and humour of that wild man of genius, should study heedfully what is said of his habits and opinions in the philosophical orations of Dion Chrysostom, particularly in Orat. VI. VIII. IX. X. and conf. t. ii. p, 336. edit. Reiske.—Ed.

us deeper in it. The Duke of Venice, that weds himself unto the sea by a ring of gold, I will not argue of prodigality, because it is a solemnity of good use and consequence in the state: but the philosopher that threw his money into the sea to avoid avarice, was a notorious prodigal. There is no road or ready way to virtue; it is not an easy point of art to disentangle ourselves from this riddle or web of sin. To perfect virtue, as to religion, there is required a panoply or complete armour: that whilst we lie at close ward against one vice, we lie not open to the veney of another. And indeed wiser discretions, that have the thread of reason to conduct them, offend without pardon; whereas, under-heads may stumble without dishonour. There go so many circumstances to piece up one good action, that it is a lesson to be good, and we are forced to be virtuous by the book. Again, the practice of men holds not an equal p ace yea, and often runs counter to their theory; we naturally know what is good, but naturally pursue what is evil: ([111]) the rhetoric wherewith I persuade another cannot persuade myself; there is a depraved appetite in us, that will with patience hear the learned instructions of reason, but yet perform no further than agrees to its own irregular humour. In brief, we all are monsters, that is, a composition of man and beast; wherein we must endeavour to be as the poets fancy that wise man Chiron, that is to have the region of man above that of beast, and sense to sit

([111]) ——"Video meliora proboque
Deteriora sequor." Ed.

but at the feet of reason. Lastly, I do desire with God, that all, but yet affirm with men, that few shall know salvation; that the bridge is narrow, the passage strait unto life: yet those who do confine the church of God, either to particular nations, churches, or families, have made it far narrower than our Saviour ever meant it.

The vulgarity of those judgments that wrap the church of God in Strabo's cloak, and restrain it unto Europe, seem to me as bad geographers as Alexander, who thought he had conquered all the world, when he had not subdued the half of any part thereof. For we cannot deny the church of God both in Asia and Africa, if we do not forget the peregrinations of the apostles, the deaths of the martyrs, the sessions of many, and, even in our reformed judgment, lawful councils, held in those parts in the minority and nonage of ours. Nor must a few differences, more remarkable in the eyes of man than perhaps in the judgment of God, excommunicate from heaven one another, much less those Christians who are in a manner all martyrs, maintaining their faith, in the noble way of persecution, and serving God in the fire, whereas we honour him in the sunshine. It is true we all hold there is a number of elect, and many to be saved; yet take our opinions together, and from the confusion thereof there will be no such thing as salvation, nor shall any one be saved. For first, the church of Rome condemneth us, we likewise them; the sub-reformists and sectaries sentence the doctrine of our church as damnable; the

atomist, or familist, reprobates all these; and all these them again. Thus, whilst the mercies of God do promise us heaven, our conceits and opinions exclude us from that place. ([112]) There must be therefore more than one St. Peter. Particular churches and sects usurp the gates of heaven, and turn the key against each other: and thus we go to heaven against each other's wills, conceits, and opinions, and, with as much uncharity as ignorance, do err, I fear, in points not only of our own, but one another's salvation.

I believe many are saved, who to man seem reprobated; and many are reprobated, who in the opinion and sentence of man stand elected. There will appear at the last day strange and unexpected examples, both of his justice and his mercy; and therefore to define either is folly in man, and insolency even in the devils. Those acute and subtle spirits, in all their sagacity, can hardly divine who shall be saved; which if they could prognosticate, their labour were at an end; nor need they compass the earth, seeking whom they may devour. Those who, upon a rigid application of the law, sentence Solomon unto damnation, condemn not only him but themselves, and the whole world; for by the letter, and written word of God, we are, without exception, in the state of death; but there is a prerogative of God, and an arbitrary pleasure above the letter of his own law, by which alone we can pretend unto salvation, and through which Solo-

([112]) That is, exclude us in our own conceit; for, of what God shall determine concerning us we know nothing.—Ed.

mon might be as easily saved as those who condemn him.

The number of those who pretend unto salvation, and those infinite swarms who think to pass through the eye of this needle, have much amazed me. That name and compellation of "little flock," doth not comfort but deject my devotion, especially when I reflect upon mine own unworthiness, wherein, according to my humble apprehensions, I am below them all.([113]) I believe there shall never be an anarchy in heaven; but as there are hierarchies amongst the angels, so shall there be degrees of priority amongst the saints. Yet it is, I protest, beyond my ambition to aspire unto the first ranks; my desires only are, and I shall be happy therein, to be but the last man, and bring up the rear in heaven.

Again, I am confident, and fully persuaded, yet dare not take my oath, of my salvation. I am as it were sure, and do believe without all doubt, that there is such a city as Constantinople; yet for me to take my oath thereon were a kind of perjury,

([113]) That this is mere mock humility a hundred passages in the "Religio Medici" would prove to demonstration. Vanity is no unpardonable sin; and, for my own part, I resemble Montaigne, in loving a vain man, for no one is half so amusing as he commonly proves. Yet humility, where it is unfeigned, pleases too: still more, indeed, than vanity. For example, the remark of Bunyan, in his "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners," that his father's house was of that rank which is meanest and most despised of all the families in the land! recommends him to our love, and raises him to our admiration.—See the Memoir I have prefixed to Mr. Rickerby's new edition of the "Pilgrim's Progress."—Ed.

because I hold no infallible warrant from my own sense to confirm me in the certainty thereof. And truly, though many pretend an absolute certainty of their salvation, yet when a humble soul shall contemplate our own unworthiness, she shall meet with many doubts, and suddenly find how little we stand in need of the precept of St. Paul, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." That which is the cause of my election, I hold to be the cause of my salvation, which was the mercy and beneplacet of God, before I was, or the foundation of the world. "Before Abraham was, I am," is the saying of Christ; yet is it true in some sense, if I say it of myself; for I was not only before myself, but Adam, that is, in the idea of God, and the decree of that synod held from all eternity. And in this sense, I say, the world was before the creation, and at the end before it had a beginning; and thus was I dead before I was alive; though my grave be England, my dying place was paradise: and Eve miscarried of me before she conceived of Cain.

Insolent zeals that do decry good works, and rely only upon faith, take not away merit: for depending upon the efficacy of their faith, they enforce the condition of God, and in a more sophistical way do seem to challenge heaven. It was decreed by God, that only those that lapped in the water like dogs, should have the honour to destroy the Midianites; yet could none of those justly challenge or imagine he deserved that honour thereupon. I do not deny but that true faith, and such as God requires, is not only a mark or token, but also a

means of our salvation ; but where to find this is as obscure to me, as my last end. And if our Saviour could object unto his own disciples and favourites, a faith that, to the quantity of a grain of mustard-seed is able to remove mountains ; surely that which we boast of, is not any thing, or at the most, but a remove from nothing. This is the tenor of my belief; wherein, though there be many things singular, and to the humour of my irregular self; yet if they square not with maturer judgments I disclaim them, and do no further favour them, than the learned and best judgments shall authorize them.

PART II.

Now for that other virtue of charity, without which faith is a mere notion, and of no existence. I have ever endeavoured to nourish the merciful disposition and humane inclination I borrowed from my parents, and regulate it to the written and prescribed laws of charity; and if I hold the true anatomy of myself, I am delineated and naturally framed to such a piece of virtue. For I am of a constitution so general that it comports and sympathizeth with all things; I have no antipathy, or rather idiosyncrasy, in diet, humour, air, any thing. I wonder not at the French for their dishes of frogs, ([114]) snails, and toad-stools; nor at the Jews for locusts and grasshoppers; but being amongst them, make them my common viands; and I find them

([114]) My own stomach is by no means so tolerant as Sir Thomas Browne's. Living in Burgundy, where frogs are habitually eaten, I procured some to be cooked, and brought to table, where my whole family were at dinner. I tasted the frogs, but could not proceed—my loathing, generated by fancy, was not to be restrained. The same effect was produced on a friend or two, who happened to be present, and on several of my children; while others, less fastidious, appeared to relish the dish amazingly, and in a few days would have become confirmed frog-eaters. I never could venture on snails.—Ed.

agree with my stomach as well as theirs. I could digest a salad gathered in a church-yard, as well as in a garden. I cannot start at the presence of a serpent, scorpion, lizard, or salamander: at the sight of a toad or viper I find in me no desire to take up a stone to destroy them. I feel not in myself those common antipathies that I can discover in others. Those national repugnances do not touch me, nor do I behold with prejudice the French, Italian, Spaniard, and Dutch:([115]) but where I find their actions in balance with my countrymen's, I honour, love, and embrace them in some degree. I was born in the eighth climate, but seem to be framed and constellated unto all. I am no plant that will not prosper out of a garden: all places, all airs make unto me one country—I am in England everywhere, and under any meridian. I have been shipwrecked, yet am not enemy with the sea or winds. I can study, play, or sleep in a tempest. In brief, I am averse from nothing: my conscience would give me the lie if I should absolutely detest or hate any essence but the devil; or so at least abhor any thing, but that we might come to composition. If there be any among those common objects of hatred I do contemn and laugh at, it is that great enemy of reason, virtue, and religion, the multitude; ([116]) that

([115]) In this respect I can predicate no less of myself, who am as much attached to foreigners, when deserving, as to my own countrymen; and have found equal return of affection.—Ed.

([116]) It is probably a mark of superior greatness of mind to abhor the multitude,—

"Odi profanum vulgus
Et arceo,"—

numerous piece of monstrosity, which taken asunder seem men, and the reasonable creatures of God; but confused together, make but one great beast, and a monstrosity more prodigious than hydra. It is no breach of charity to call these fools; it is the style all holy writers have afforded them, set down by Solomon in canonical Scripture, and a point of our faith to believe so. Neither in the name of multitude do I only include the base and minor sort of people; there is a rabble even amongst the gentry, a sort of plebeian heads, whose fancy moves with the same wheel as these; ([117]) men in the same

---

and history celebrates many distinguished men who cherished such an aversion. Thus my Lord Clarendon, speaking of Strafford, says, "Of all his passions, his pride was most predominant; which a moderate exercise of ill fortune might have corrected and reformed; and which was, by the hand of heaven, strangely punished, by bringing his destruction upon him by two things that he most *despised*—the *people* and Sir Harry Vane." (Hist. of the Rebell. I. 456.) Coriolanus too, and Sylla, were of this mind; so that the haters of the people rank with splendid company. But this does not recommend the feeling to me. On the contrary, I run into the very antipodes of greatness, and, after God, love mankind with all my might, with all my soul, and with all my strength, and would endure anything to do them good; and that, too, without finding, though not without desiring, a return of similar love on their part. And I am comforted by the reflection that, if very able men have despised mankind, CHRIST loved them and suffered death for their sakes. There have also been among men striking examples of this philanthropy—Pericles, Socrates, Howard; and, upon the whole, I had rather resemble these than Sylla, Strafford, or Sir Thomas Browne.—ED.

([117]) On this subject I would gladly, were there room, quote the whole of what old Burton says, (Anatomy of Melancholy, Part II. § 3.) who is as severe on great people as Sir Thomas on the multitude. "We may generally conclude," he observes,

level with mechanics, though their fortunes do somewhat gild their infirmities, and their purses compound for their follies. But as in casting account, three or four men together come short in account of one man placed by himself below them; so neither are a troop of these ignorant Doradoes, of that true esteem and value as many a forlorn person, whose condition doth place him below their feet. Let us speak like politicians, there is a nobility without heraldry, a natural dignity, whereby one man is ranked with another; another filed before him, according to the quality of his desert, and pre-eminence of his good parts, though the corruption of these times, and the bias of present practice wheel another way. ([118]) Thus it was in the first and primitive commonwealths, and is yet in the integrity and cradle of well-ordered polities, till corruption getteth ground, ruder desires labouring after that which wiser considerations contemn; every one having a liberty to amass and heap up riches, and they a license or faculty to do or purchase any thing.

" the greater men, the more vicious. In fine, as Æneas Sylvius adds, they are most part miserable, sottish, and filthy fellows; like the walls of their houses, fair without, foul within. What dost thou vaunt of now? What dost thou gape and wonder at? Admire him for his brave apparel, horses, dogs, fine houses, manors, orchards, gardens, walks? Why, a fool may be possessor of this as well as he; and he that accounts him a better man, a noble man, for having of it, he is a fool himself. Now go and brag of thy gentility!"—Ed.

([118]) And in monarchies and timocrasies, the practice of all times wheels in the same direction. It is not the *times* but *institutions* that regulate such matters.—Ed.

This general and indifferent temper of mine doth more nearly dispose me to this noble virtue. It is a happiness to be born and framed unto virtue, and to grow up from the seeds of nature, rather than the inoculation and forced graffs of education: yet if we are directed only by our particular natures, and regulate our inclinations by no higher rule than that of our reasons, we are but moralists; divinity will still call us heathens, therefore this great work of charity, must have other motives, ends, and impulsions. I give no alms only to satisfy the hunger of my brother, but to fulfil and accomplish the will and command of my God; I draw not my purse for his sake that demands it, but his that enjoined it; I relieve no man upon the rhetoric of his miseries, nor to content mine own commiserating disposition: for this is still but moral charity, and an act that oweth more to passion than reason. He that relieves another upon the bare suggestion and bowels of pity, doth not this so much for his sake, as for his own: for by compassion we make others' misery our own; and so, by relieving them, we relieve ourselves also. It is as erroneous a conceit to redress other men's misfortunes upon the common considerations of merciful natures, that it may be one day our own case; for this is a sinister and politic kind of charity, whereby we seem to bespeak the pities of men in the like occasions; and truly I have observed that those professed eleemosynaries, though in a crowd or multitude, do yet direct and place

their petitions on a few and selected persons: there is surely a physiognomy, which those experienced and master mendicants observe, whereby they instantly discover a merciful aspect, and will single out a face, wherein they spy the signatures and marks of mercy: for there are mystically in our faces certain characters which carry in them the motto of our souls, wherein he that can read A B C may read our natures.([119]) I hold, moreover, that there is a phytognomy, or physiognomy, not only of men, but of plants and vegetables; and in every one of them some outward figures which hang as signs or bushes of their inward forms. The finger of God hath left an inscription upon all his works, not graphical, or composed of letters, but of their several forms, constitutions, parts, and operations; which aptly joined together do make one word that doth express their natures. By these letters God calls the stars by their names; and by this alphabet Adam assigned to every creature a name peculiar to its nature. Now there are, besides these characters in our faces, certain mystical figures in our hands, which I dare not call mere dashes, strokes *à la volée*, or at random, because delineated by a pencil that never works in vain; and hereof I take more particular notice, because I carry that in mine own hand, which I could never read of, nor discover in another. Aristotle, I con-

([119]) And yet it seems to be a rule that, "fronti nulla fides." Shakspeare, too, was of opinion that

"There's no art
To find the mind's complexion in the face."—ED.

fess, in his acute, and singular book([120]) of physiognomy, hath made no mention of chiromancy; yet I believe the Egyptians, who were nearer addicted to these abstruse and mystical sciences, had a knowledge therein; to which those vagabond and counterfeit Egyptians did after pretend, and perhaps retained a few corrupted principles, which sometimes might verify their prognostics.

It is the common wonder of all men, how among so many millions of faces, there should be none alike: now, contrary, I wonder as much how there should be any. He that shall consider how many thousand several words have been carelessly and without study composed out of twenty-four letters; withal, how many hundred lines there are to be drawn in the fabric of one man, shall easily find that this variety is necessary: and it will be very hard that they shall so concur, as to make one portrait like another. Let a painter carelessly limn out a million of faces, and you shall find them all different; yea, let him have his copy before him, yet after all his art there will remain a sensible distinction; for the pattern or example of every thing is the perfectest in that kind, whereof we still come short, though we transcend or go beyond it, because herein it is wide, and agrees not in all points unto the copy. Nor doth the similitude of

([120]) This brief tract, of twenty-five pages (Arist. Oper. t. XVI. pp. 112—132, edit. Tauchnitz.) is considered spurious by modern criticism, which discovers in the style marks of another hand.—Ed.

creatures disparage the variety of nature, nor any way confound the works of God. For even in things alike there is diversity; and those that do seem to accord, do manifestly disagree. And thus is man like God; for in the same things that we resemble him, we are utterly different from him. There was never any thing so like another, as in all points to concur; there will ever some reserved difference slip in, to prevent the identity, without which, two several things would not be alike, but the same, which is impossible.

But to return from philosophy to charity: I hold not so narrow a conceit of this virtue, as to conceive that to give alms is only to be charitable, or think a piece of liberality can comprehend the total of charity. Divinity hath wisely divided the acts thereof into many branches, and hath taught us in this narrow way, many paths unto goodness: as many ways as we may do good, so many ways we may be charitable; there are infirmities, not only of body but of soul and fortunes, which do require the merciful hand of our abilities. I cannot contemn a man for ignorance, but behold him with as much pity as I do Lazarus.([121]) It is no greater charity to clothe his body, than apparel the nakedness of his soul. It is an honourable object to see the reasons of other men wear our liveries, and

([121]) See note 116, and reconcile the passages by supposing the author to have been in a more kindly mood when this was written.—Ed.

their borrowed understandings do homage to the bounty of ours. It is the cheapest way of beneficence, and like the natural charity of the sun, illuminates another without obscuring itself. To be reserved and caitiff in this part of goodness is the sordidest piece of covetousness, and more contemptible than pecuniary avarice. To this (as calling myself a scholar) I am obliged by the duty of my condition: I make not, therefore, my head, a grave, but a treasure of knowledge;([122]) I intend no monopoly, but a community in learning; I study not for my own sake only, but for theirs that study not for themselves. I envy no man that knows more than myself, but pity them that know less. I instruct no man as an exercise of my knowledge, or with an intent rather to nourish and keep it alive in mine own head, than beget and propagate it in his; and in the midst of all my endeavours, there is but one thought that dejects me, that my acquired parts must perish with myself, nor can be legacied among my honoured friends. I cannot fall out, or contemn a man for an error, or conceive why a difference in opinion should divide an affection: for controversies, disputes, and argumentations, both in philosophy and in divinity, if they meet with discreet and peaceable natures, do not infringe the laws of charity: in all disputes, so much as there is of passion, so much there is of nothing to the purpose; for then reason, like a

([122]) To enlighten mankind, which, in my opinion, is much better than despising them.—Ed.

bad hound, spends upon a false scent,(123) and forsakes the question first started. And this is one reason why controversies are never determined; for though they be amply proposed, they are scarce at all handled, they do so swell with unnecessary digressions; and the parenthesis on the party, is often as large as the main discourse upon the subject. The foundations of religion are already established, and the principles of salvation subscribed unto by all; there remain not many controversies worth a passion, and yet never any disputed without, not only in divinity, but inferior arts: what a *βατραχομυομαχία* and hot skirmish is betwixt S. and T. in Lucian; how do grammarians hack and slash for the genetive case in Jupiter! How do they break their own pates to salve that of Priscian: *Si foret in terris, rideret Democritus!* Yea, even amongst wiser militants, how many wounds have been given, and credits slain, for the poor victory of an opinion, or beggerly conquest of a distinction! Scholars are men of peace, they bear no arms, but their tongues

(123) Socrates, in a passage of the Gorgias, alluded to in a former note, makes several very excellent remarks on this common failing. "Like me, I presume," says he to the sophist, "you have been present at many disputations, and have remarked how great is the difficulty, be the subject of the conversation what it may, which men experience, in keeping to the matter in hand, and in conducting the debate to a conclusion with profit to themselves and others. Generally, people accuse each other of being wanting in clearness and precision, and, in consequence, get out of temper, imagine they are contradicted from mere malice, and end by descending to mutual abuse, and the grossest personalities." (Plat. Oper. III. 25.)—Ed.

are sharper than Actus's razor; their pens carry further, and give a louder report than thunder: I had rather stand the shock of a basilisco, than the fury of a merciless pen. It is not mere zeal to learning, or devotion to the muses, that wiser princes patronize the arts and carry an indulgent aspect unto scholars; but a desire to have their names eternized by the memory of their writings, and a fear of the revengeful pen of succeeding ages: for these are the men, that when they have played their parts, and had their exits, must step out and give the moral of their scenes, and deliver unto posterity an inventory of their virtues and vices.([124]) And surely there goes a great deal of conscience to the compiling of a history: there is no reproach to the scandal of a story; it is such an authentic kind of falsehood, that with authority belies our good names to all nations and posterity.

([124]) And as often as they are able, they take upon themselves the task of chronicling their own deeds, in the hope of throwing dust into the eyes of posterity. Sometimes, unable to write, and apprehending the justice of those who can, they affect to speak contemptuously of authors, taking their revenge, by a kind of prolepsis, for what they know will be said of them. Their sentiments are condensed, and given in somewhat better language than they could themselves have mastered, by the youthful Phædros, in the Dialogue named after him. Καὶ σύνοισθά, says he, που καὶ αὐτὸς ὅτι οἱ μέγιστον δυνάμενοί τε καὶ σεμνότατοι ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν αἰσχύνονται λόγους τε γράφειν καὶ καταλείπειν συγγράμματα ἑαυτῶν, δόξαν φοβούμενοι τοῦ ἔπειτα χρόνου, μὴ σοφισταὶ καλῶνται. But Socrates soon convinces the young man that all these feints are absurd; and that none think meanly of literature, but such as despair of rendering it a stepping-stone to fame. (Plat. Oper. I. 62 f. Bekk.)—Ed.

There is another offence unto charity, which no author hath ever written of, and few take notice of; and that is the reproach, not of whole professions, mysteries, and conditions, but of whole nations; wherein by opprobrious epithets we miscall each other, and by an uncharitable logic, from a disposition in a few, conclude a habit in all.

> Le mutin Anglais, et le bravache Ecossois;
> Le bougre Italien, et le fol François;
> Le poltron Romain, le larron de Gasgogne,
> L'Espagnol superbe, et l'Allemand ivrogne.

St. Paul, that calls the Cretans liars, doth it but indirectly, and upon quotation of their own poet. It is as bloody a thought in one way as Nero's was in another. For by a word we wound a thousand, and at one blow assassinate the honour of a nation. It is as complete a piece of madness to miscall and rave against the times, or think to recall men to reason, by a fit of passion. Democritus, that thought to laugh the times into goodness, seems to me as deeply hypochondriac, as Heraclitus that bewailed them. It moves not my spleen to behold the multitude in their proper humours, that is, in their fits of folly and madness, as well understanding that wisdom is not profaned unto the world, and it is the privilege of a few to be virtuous. They that endeavour to abolish vice, destroy also virtue,([125]) for contraries, though they destroy one another, are yet in life of one another. Thus

([125]) But they promote happiness. Even regarding the matter philosophically, however, this is a mere sophism; it is as if one should say, "By abolishing the crooked, you also destroy the straight." So long as the power to err remains, virtue will re-

virtue (abolish vice) is an idea: again, the community of sin doth not disparage goodness: for when vice gains upon the major part, virtue, in whom it remains, becomes more excellent: and being lost in some, multiplies its goodness in others, which remain untouched, and persist entire in the general inundation. I can therefore behold vice without a satire, content only with an admonition, or instructive reprehension; for noble natures, and such as are capable of goodness, are railed into vice, that might as easily be admonished into virtue; and we should be all so far the orators of goodness, as to protect her from the power of vice, and maintain the cause of injured truth. No man can justly censure or condemn another, because indeed no man truly knows another. This I perceive in myself; for I am in the dark to all the world, and my nearest friends behold me but in a cloud: those that know me but superficially, think less of me than I do of myself; those of my near acquaintance think more. God, who truly knows me, knows that I am nothing; for he only beholds me, and all the world; who looks not on us through a derived ray, or a trajection of a sensible species, but beholds the substance without the helps of accidents, and the forms of things, as we their operations. Further no man can judge another, because no man knows himself; for we censure others but as they disagree from

main, though no one should ever err. It is only by removing the *power* to sin that you destroy the merit of obedience; which is probably what he intended to say.—Ed.

that humour which we fancy laudable in ourselves, and commend others but for that wherein they seem to quadrate and consent with us. So that in conclusion, all is but that we all condemn, self-love. It is the general complaint of these times, and perhaps of those past, that charity grows cold; which I perceive most verified in those which most do manifest the fires and flames of zeal; for it is a virtue that best agrees with coldest natures, and such as are complexioned for humility.([126]) But how shall we expect charity towards others, when we are uncharitable to ourselves? Charity begins at home, is the voice of the world; yet is every man his greatest enemy, and, as it were, his own executioner. *Non occides*, is the commandment of God, yet scarce observed by any man; for I perceive every man is his own Atropos, and lends a hand to cut the thread of his own days. Cain was not therefore the first murderer, but Adam, who brought in death; whereof he beheld the practice and example in his own son Abel, and saw that verified in the experience of another, which faith could not persuade him in the theory of himself.

There is, I think, no man that apprehends his own miseries less than myself, and no man that so nearly apprehends another's. I could lose an arm

([126]) It is a common habit to prefer times past to the time present, in every respect. But, taking all things into consideration, a philosopher will probably find that the age he lives in is at least as good as almost any that have preceded it. Charity by no means grows cold. Human nature, on the contrary, rather improves than otherwise; and whatever virtues our ancestors had, were probably inferior to our own.—Ed.

without a tear, and with few groans, methinks, be quartered into pieces;([127]) yet can I weep most seriously at a play, and receive with true passion, the counterfeit grief of those known and professed impostures. It is a barbarous part of inhumanity to add unto any afflicted party's misery, or endeavour to multiply in any man, a passion, whose single nature is already above his patience: this was the greatest affliction of Job; and those oblique expostulations of his friends, a deeper injury than the downright blows of the devil. It is not the tears of our own eyes only, but of our friends, also, that do exhaust the current of our sorrows; which falling into many streams, runs more peaceably, and is contented with a narrower channel. It is an act within the power of charity, to translate a passion out of one breast into another, and to divide a sorrow almost out of itself; for an affliction, like a dimension, may be so divided, as if not invisible, at least to become insensible. Now, with my friend I desire not to share or participate, but to engross his sorrows, that by making them mine own, I may more easily discuss them; for in mine own reason, and within myself, I can command that, which I cannot entreat without myself, and within the circle of another. I have often thought those noble pairs and examples of friendship not so truly histories of what had been, as fictions of what should be; but I now perceive nothing in them but possibilities, nor anything in the heroic ex-

([127]) *Credat Judæus Apella.*—Ed.

amples of Damon and Pythias, Achilles and Patroclus, which methinks upon some grounds I could not perform within the narrow compass of myself. That a man should lay down his life for his friend seems strange to vulgar affections, and such as confine themselves within that worldly principle, Charity begins at home. For my own part, I could never remember the relations that I hold unto myself, nor the respect that I owe unto my own nature, in the cause of God, my country, and my friends. Next to these three I do embrace myself: I confess I do not observe that order that the schools ordain our affections, to love our parents, wives, children, and then our friends; for excepting the injunctions of religion, I do not find in myself such a necessary and indissoluble sympathy to all those of my blood. I hope I do not break the fifth commandment, if I conceive I may love my friend before the nearest of my blood, even those to whom I owe the principles of life. I never yet cast a true affection on a woman, but I have loved my friend as I do virtue, my soul, my God.([128]) From hence methinks I do conceive how

([128]) This Doric modification of passion is what I do not understand. In my humble judgment, the man most capable of love will be most capable of friendship. David, though he loved Jonathan with an affection passing the love of women, (a thing to me inexplicable,) still loved women passionately. The same observation will apply to Homer's Achilles. And necessarily, for love is energy, an expansive, irresistible grasping at whatever is good or beautiful. Sir Thomas Browne's confession proves his character to have been deficient in an important element of genius, though no doubt he possessed other elements in no ordinary degree.--Ed.

God loves man, what happiness there is in the love of God. Omitting all other, there are three most mystical unions; two natures in one person; three persons in one nature; one soul in two bodies. For though, indeed, they be really divided, yet are they so united, as they seem but one, and make rather a duality than two distinct souls.

There are wonders in true affection; it is a body of enigmas, mysteries, and riddles; wherein two so become one, as they both become two. I love my friend before myself, and yet methinks I do not love him enough. Some few months hence, my multiplied affection will make me believe I have not loved him at all: when I am from him, I am dead till I be with him; when I am with him, I am not satisfied, but would still be nearer him. United souls are not satisfied with embraces, but desire to be truly each other; which being impossible, their desires are infinite, and proceed without a possibility of satisfaction. Another misery there is in affection, that whom we truly love like our own, we forget their looks, nor can our memory retain the idea of their faces; and it is no wonder: for they are ourselves, and our affection makes their looks our own. This noble affection falls not on vulgar and common constitutions, but on such as are marked for virtue. He that can love his friend with this noble ardour, will, in a competent degree, affect all. Now, if we can bring our affections to look beyond the body, and cast an eye upon the soul, we have found the true object, not only of friendship, but charity; and the greatest happi-

ness that we can bequeath the soul, is that wherein we all do place our last felicity, salvation; which, though it be not in our power to bestow, it is in our charity, and pious invocations to desire, if not procure and further. I cannot contentedly frame a prayer for myself in particular, without a catalogue for my friends; nor request a happiness wherein my sociable disposition doth not desire the fellowship of my neighbour. I never heard the toll of a passing-bell, though in my mirth, without my prayers and best wishes for the departing spirit.([129]) I cannot go to cure the body of my patient, but I forget my profession, and call unto God for his soul. I cannot see one say his prayers, but instead of imitating him, I fall into a supplication for him, who, perhaps, is no more to me than a common nature: and if God hath vouchsafed an ear to my supplications, there are surely many happy that never saw me, and enjoy the blessing of my unknown devotions. To pray for enemies, that is, for their salvation, is no harsh precept, but the practice of our daily and ordinary devotions. I cannot believe the story of the Italian: our bad wishes and uncharitable desires proceed no further than this life; it is the devil, and the uncharitable votes of hell, that desire our misery in the world to come.

([129]) A very fine touch of humanity, which, with many other things in the work, leads me to suspect, that the hatred of the multitude, animadverted upon in note 116, was nothing but affectation; or that he mistook a timid reluctance to mingle with the throng, (a mere constitutional weakness,) for the unchristian aversion which he there professes.—Ed.

To do no injury, nor take none, was a principle, which to my former years, and impatient affections, seemed to contain enough of morality; but my more settled years, and Christian constitution, have fallen upon severer resolutions. I can hold there is no such thing as injury; that if there be, there is no such injury as revenge, and no such revenge as the contempt of an injury; that to hate another, is to malign himself; that the truest way to love another, is to despise ourselves. I were unjust unto mine own conscience, if I should say I am at variance with anything like myself. I find there are many pieces in this one fabric of man; this frame is raised upon a mass of antipathies. I am one, methinks, but as the world; wherein, notwithstanding, there are a swarm of distinct essences, and in them another world of contrarieties; we carry private and domestic enemies within, public and more hostile adversaries without. The devil, that did but buffet St. Paul, plays, methinks, at sharp with me. Let me be nothing, if within the compass of myself, I do not find the battle of Lepanto, passion against reason, reason against faith, faith against the devil, and my conscience against all. There is another man within me, that is angry with me, rebukes, commands, and dastards me. I have no conscience of marble, to resist the hammer of more heavy offences; nor yet too soft and waxen, as to take the impression of each single peccadillo or scape of infirmity. I am of a strange belief, that it is as easy to be forgiven some sins, as to commit some others. For my original sin, I hold it to be

washed away in my baptism; for my actual transgressions, I compute and reckon with God, but from my last repentance, sacrament, or general absolution; and therefore am not terrified with the sins or madness of my youth. I thank the goodness of God, I have no sins that want a name: I am not singular in offences; my transgressions are epidemical, and from the common breath of our corruption. For there are certain tempers of body, which matched with a humorous depravity of mind, do hatch and produce vitiosities, whose newness and monstrosity of nature admits no name; this was the temper of that lecher that carnalled with a statue, and constitution of Nero in his spintrian recreations: for the heavens are not only fruitful in new and unheard-of stars, the earth in plants and animals; but men's minds also in villany and vices. Now the dulness of my reason, and the vulgarity of my disposition, never prompted my invention, nor solicited my affection unto any of those; yet even those common and quotidian infirmities that so necessarily attend me, and do seem to be my very nature, have so dejected me, so broken the estimation that I should have otherwise of myself, that I repute myself the most abject piece of mortality. Divines prescribe a fit of sorrow to repentance; there goes indignation, anger, sorrow, hatred, into mine; passions of a contrary nature, which neither seem to suit with this action, nor my proper constitution. It is no breach of charity to ourselves, to be at variance with our vices; nor to abhor that part of us, which is an

enemy to the ground of charity, our God; wherein we do but imitate our great selves, the world, whose divided antipathies, and contrary faces do yet carry a charitable regard unto the whole by their particular discords, preserving the common harmony, and keeping in fetters those powers, whose rebellions once masters, might be the ruin of all.

I thank God, amongst those millions of vices I do inherit and hold from Adam, I have escaped one, and that a mortal enemy to charity, the first and father-sin, not only of man, but of the devil—pride; a vice whose name is comprehended in a monosyllable, but in its nature not circumscribed with a world. I have escaped it in a condition that can hardly avoid it. Those petty acquisitions and reputed perfections that advance and elevate the conceits of other men, add no feathers unto mine. I have seen a grammarian tower and plume himself over a single line in Horace, and show more pride in the construction of one ode, than the author in the composure of the whole book. For my own part, besides the jargon and patois of several provinces, I understand no less than six languages;([130])

([130]) He was, no doubt, an accomplished scholar; but, of those persons who have professed to "understand" so many languages, I have seldom found that they thoroughly understood any. There have certainly been exceptions—Milton, Salmasius, Joseph Scaliger, Sir William Jones, and some others—though the last mentioned used to think he understood a language when he had mastered its elements in a grammar. Sir Thomas Browne goes further than mere language, however. He had travelled he tells us; and during his sojourn abroad, had investigated the nature of climates, the chorography of provinces, the topography

yet I protest I have no higher conceit of myself than had our fathers before the confusion of Babel, when there was but one language in the world, and none to boast himself either linguist or critic. I have not only seen several countries, beheld the nature of their climes, the chorography of their provinces, topography of their cities, but understood their several laws, customs, and policies; yet cannot all this persuade the dulness of my spirit unto such an opinion of myself, as I behold in nimbler and conceited heads, that never looked a degree beyond their nests. I know the names, and somewhat more, of all the constellations in my horizon; yet I have seen a prating mariner, that could only name the pointers and the north star, out-talk me, and conceit himself a whole sphere above me. I know most of the plants of my country, and of those about me; yet, methinks I do not know so many as when I did but know a hundred, and had scarcely ever simpled further than Cheapside. For indeed, heads of capacity, and such as are not full

---

of numerous cities; and understood the laws, customs, and polities of the several countries through which he had passed. From this it is abundantly evident that very slight and elementary knowledge must have contented him; for I appeal to any man who has ever visited a foreign state, whether it be an easy matter to become practically acquainted with its laws, customs, and government; I say practically, for through books he might, without looking "a degree beyond his nest," make himself the depository of other men's experience, and appear to comprehend the whole. I have made the experiment on a somewhat larger scale than the author, and protest that the thorough understanding of all the things which he here professes to know, seemed to me the labour of half a life devoted wholly to the task.—Ed.

with a handful, or easy measure of knowledge, think they know nothing, till they know all; which being impossible, they fall upon the opinion of Socrates, and only know they know not anything. I cannot think that Homer pined away upon the riddle of the fisherman, or, that Aristotle, who understood the uncertainty of knowledge, and confessed so often the reason of man too weak for the works of nature, did ever drown himself upon the flux and reflux of the Euripus. We do but learn to-day, what our better advanced judgments will unteach to-morrow: and Aristotle doth not instruct us, as Plato did him; that is, to confute himself. I have run through all sorts, yet find no rest in any: though our first studies and junior endeavours may style us peripatetics, stoics, or academics, yet I perceive the wisest heads prove, at last, almost all sceptics, and stand like Janus in the field of knowledge. I have therefore one common and authentic philosophy I learned in the schools, whereby I discourse and satisfy the reason of other men; another more reserved, and drawn from experience, whereby I content mine own. ([131]) Solomon, that complained of ignorance in the height of knowledge, hath not only humbled my conceits, but discouraged my endeavours. There is yet another conceit that hath sometimes made me shut my books, which tells me it is a vanity to waste our days in the blind pursuit of knowledge;

([131]) That is, he had, like some ancient philosophers, an exoteric and esoteric doctrine—one opinion for the public, and another for himself. Have we any glimpses of the latter in the "Religio Medici?"—Ed.

it is but attending a little longer, and we shall enjoy that by instinct and infusion, which we endeavour at here by labour and inquisition. It is better to sit down in a modest ignorance, and rest contented with the natural blessing of our own reasons, than buy the uncertain knowledge of this life, with sweat and vexation, which death gives every fool gratis, and is an accessary of our glorification.

I was never yet once, and commend their resolutions who never marry twice: not that I disallow of second marriage; as neither in all cases of polygamy, which, considering some times, and the unequal number of both sexes, may be also necessary. ([132]) The whole world was made for man, but the twelfth part of man for woman. Man is the whole world, and the breath of God; woman the rib and crooked piece of man. I could be content that we might procreate like trees, without conjunction, or that there were any way to perpetuate the world without this trivial and vulgar

([132]) The inequality of the sexes has been proved to be chiefly imaginary, and in many places the difference that exists is in favour of the male sex. Thus, even in the Roman states, where, from various physical causes, a contrary result might have been expected, the proportion of males, both in city and country, is greater than of females. The population of Rome, in 1836, was 153,678, of which 81,448 were men; and 72,190 women. (Bowring's Report on the Statistics of Tuscany, Lucca, the Roman States, &c. p. 70.) In the despotic empires of Asia, where early marriages are common, the proportion of females to males appears to be larger; but, with the exception of some few spots, it may be affirmed that, wherever one man has two wives, some one among his neighbours must go without one.—Ed.

way of coition; it is the foolishest act a wise man commits in all his life, nor is there any thing that will more deject his cooled imagination, when he shall consider what an odd and unworthy piece of folly he hath committed. I speak not in prejudice, nor am averse from that sweet sex, but naturally amorous of all that is beautiful. I can look a whole day with delight upon a handsome picture, though it be but of a horse. It is my temper, and I like it the better, to affect all harmony; and sure there is music even in the beauty, and the silent note which Cupid strikes, far sweeter than the sound of an instrument. For there is a music wherever there is a harmony, order, or proportion; and thus far we may maintain the music of the spheres; for those well-ordered motions, and regular paces, though they give no sound unto the ear, yet to the understanding they strike a note most full of harmony. Whosoever is harmonically composed delights in harmony; which makes me much distrust the symmetry of those heads which declaim against all church-music. For myself, not only from my obedience, but my particular genius, I do embrace it: for even that vulgar and tavern-music, which makes one man merry, another mad, strikes in me a deep fit of devotion, and a profound contemplation of the first composer. There is something in it of divinity more than the ear discovers: it is an hieroglyphical and shadowed lesson of the whole world, and creatures of God; such a melody to the ear, as the whole world well understood, would afford the understanding. In

brief, it is a sensible fit of that harmony, which intellectually sounds in the ears of God. I will not say with Plato, the soul is a harmony, but harmonical, and has its nearest sympathy unto music: thus some, whose temper of body agrees, and humours the constitution of their souls, are born poets, though indeed all are naturally inclined unto rhythm. This made Tacitus, ([133]) in the very first line of his story, fall upon a verse, and Cicero, the worst of poets, but declaiming for a poet, ([134]) falls in the very first sentence upon a perfect hexameter.([135]) I feel not in me those sordid and unchristian desires of my profession; I do not secretly implore and wish for plagues, rejoice at famines, revolve ephemerides and almanacs, in expectation of malignant aspects, fatal conjunctions, and eclipses: I rejoice not at unwholesome springs, or unseasonable winters; ([136]) my prayer goes with the husbandman's; I desire every thing in its proper season, that neither men nor the times be put out of temper. Let me be sick myself, if sometimes the malady of my patient be not a disease unto me. I desire rather to cure his infirmities than

([133]) Urbem Romam in principio reges habuere.

([134]) Pro Archia poeta.

([135]) In qua me non inficior mediocriter esse.

([136]) The officers of the Indian army have been known to drink as a toast, "An unhealthy season and a bloody war!" In the hope, of course, that they would bring a larger harvest of promotions. Similar in spirit are the toasts sometimes drunk by physicians—I mean the ghouls of the profession—for the humane and gentlemanly, who have ever constituted a majority, undoubtedly feel and think like Sir Thomas Browne.—Ed.

my own necessities: where I do him no good, methinks it is scarce honest gain; though I confess it is but the worthy salary of our well-intended endeavours. I am not only ashamed, but heartily sorry, that besides death, there are diseases incurable; yet not for my own sake, or that they be beyond my art, but for the general cause and sake of humanity, whose common cause I apprehend as mine own. And to speak more generally, those three noble professions, which all civil commonwealths do honour, are raised upon the fall of Adam, and are not exempt from their infirmities; there are not only diseases incurable in physic, but cases indissolvable in laws, vices incorrigible in divinity. If general councils may err, I do not see why particular courts should be infallible; their perfectest rules are raised upon the erroneous reasons of man; and the laws of one do but condemn the rules of another; as Aristotle oft-times the opinions of his predecessors, because, though agreeable to reason, yet were not consonant to his own rules and logic of his proper principles. Again, to speak nothing of the sin against the Holy Ghost, whose cure not only, but whose nature is unknown; I can cure the gout or stone in some, sooner than divinity, pride, or avarice in others. I can cure vices by physic, when they remain incurable by divinity: and shall obey my pills, when they contemn their precepts. I boast nothing, but plainly say we all labour against our own cure; for death is the cure of all diseases. There is no catholicon, or universal remedy I know, but this, which, though nauseous

to queasy stomachs, yet to prepared appetites is nectar, and a pleasant potion of immortality. ([137])

For my conversation, it is like the sun's, with all men, and with a friendly aspect to good and bad. Methinks there is no man bad, and the worst, best; that is, while they are kept within the circle of those qualities wherein they are good. There is no man's mind of such discordant and jarring a temper, to which a tuneable disposition may not strike a harmony. *Magnæ virtutes, nec minora vitia,* it is the posy of the best natures, and may be inverted on the worst. There are in the most depraved and venomous dispositions certain pieces that remain untouched, which by an antiperistasis become more excellent, or by the excellency of their antipathies are able to preserve themselves from the contagion of their enemy vices, and persist entire beyond the general corruption. For it is also thus in nature. The greatest balsams do lie enveloped in the bodies of most powerful corrosives; I say, moreover, and I ground upon experience, that poisons contain within themselves their own antidote, and that which preserves them from the venom of themselves, without which they were not deleterious to others only, but to themselves also. But it is the corruption that I fear within me, not the contagion of commerce without me. It is that unruly regimen within me, that will destroy me; it is I

([137]) On this declamation respecting the advantages of death I have already animadverted. In the mouths even of those who are prepared to die it is churlish and ungrateful; in those of all others it is madness.—Ed.

that do infect myself, the man without a navel yet lives in me. I feel that original canker corrode and devour me; and therefore *defenda me Dios de me,* "Lord deliver me from myself," is a part of my litany, and the first voice of my retired imaginations. There is no man alone, because every man is a microcosm, and carries the whole world about him; *nunquam minus solus quàm cum solus,* though it be the apophthegm of a wise man, is yet true in the mouth of a fool; indeed, though in a wilderness, a man is never alone, not only because he is with himself and his own thoughts, but because he is with the devil;([135]) who ever consorts with our solitude, and is that unruly rebel that musters up those disordered motions which accompany our sequestered imaginations. And to speak more narrowly, there is no such thing as solitude, nor any thing that can be said to be alone and by itself but God, who is his own circle, and can subsist by himself; all others, besides their dissimilarity and heterogenous parts, which in a manner multiply their natures, cannot subsist without the concourse of God, and the society of that hand which doth uphold their natures. In brief, there can be nothing truly alone, and by itself, which is not truly one; and

([135]) It is to be hoped that some have better company in their solitude—that there are still those who, like the patriarch Enoch, "walk there with God." Most good men, I imagine, are never so removed from evil as when buried in their own contemplations, far from the world and its disturbing influences. He who entertains himself habitually with iniquity, when alone, cannot boast much of the constitution of his mind.—Ed.

such is only God; all others do transcend an unity, and so by consequence are many.

Now for my life, it is a miracle of thirty years, which to relate were not a history but a piece of poetry, and would sound to common ears like a fable; for the world, I count it not an inn but an hospital; and a place not to live, but to die in. The world that I regard is myself; it is the microcosm of my own frame that I cast mine eye on, for the other, I use it but like my globe, and turn it round sometimes for my recreation. ([139]) Men that look upon my outside, perusing only my condition and fortunes, do err in my altitude, for I am above Atlas's shoulders. The earth is a point, not only in respect of the heavens above us, but of that heavenly and celestial part within us; that mass of flesh that circumscribes me limits not my mind; that surface that tells the heaven it hath an end cannot persuade me I have any. I take my circle to be above three hundred and sixty. Though the number of the arc do measure my body it comprehendeth not my mind. Whilst I study to find how I am a microcosm, or little world, I find myself something more than the great. There is surely a piece of divinity in us, something that was before

([139]) Sir Kenelm Digby very good-humouredly laughs at this passage, from which he infers, what is everywhere abundantly apparent, that our author had "a special good opinion of himself," adding candidly, however, that he had indeed reason. (Observations upon the "Religio Medici," p. 164.) I have already remarked, that in my opinion such harmless bursts of vanity are far more agreeable than the affected humility elsewhere made a parade of.—Ed.

the elements, and owes no homage unto the sun. Nature tells me I am the image of God, as well as Scripture. He that understands not thus much hath not his introduction, or first lesson, and is yet to begin the alphabet of man. Let me not injure the felicity of others, if I say I am as happy as any; *Ruat cælum, fiat voluntas tua,* salveth all; so that whatsoever happens it is but what our daily prayers desire. In brief, I am content, and what should Providence add more? Surely this is it we call happiness, and this do I enjoy; with this I am happy in a dream, and as content to enjoy a happiness in a fancy, as others in a more apparent truth and reality. There is surely a nearer apprehension of anything that delights us in our dreams, than in our waking senses; without this I were unhappy; for my awaked judgment discontents me, ever whispering unto me that I am from my friend; but my friendly dreams in night requite me, and make me think I am within his arms. I thank God for my happy dreams, as I do for my good rest, for there is a satisfaction unto reasonable desires, and such as can be content with a fit of happiness. And surely it is not a melancholy conceit to think we are all asleep in this world, and that the conceits of this life are as mere dreams to those of the next, as the phantasms of the night, to the conceits of the day. There is an equal delusion in both, and the one doth but seem to be the emblem or picture of the other. We are somewhat more than ourselves in our sleeps, and the slumber of the body seems to be but the waking

of the soul. It is the ligation of sense, but the liberty of reason, and our waking conceptions do not match the fancies of our sleeps. At my nativity my ascendant was the watery sign of Scorpius. I was born in the planetary hour of Saturn, and I think I have a piece of the leaden planet in me. ([140]) I am no way facetious, nor disposed for the mirth and galliardize of company; yet in one dream I can compose a whole comedy, behold the action, apprehend the jests, and laugh myself awake at the conceits thereof. Were my memory as faithful as my reason is then fruitful, I would never study but in my dreams; ([141]) and this time also would I choose for my devotions; but our grosser memories have then so little hold of our abstracted understandings that they forget the story, and can only relate to our awaked souls a confused and broken tale of that that hath passed. Aristotle, who hath written a singular tract of sleep, hath not, methinks, thoroughly defined it; nor yet Galen, though he seem to have corrected it; for those noctambuloes and night-walkers, though in their sleep, do yet enjoy the action of their senses. We must therefore say, that there is something in us that is not in the jurisdiction of Morpheus, and that

([140]) They who remember his opinion of women will readily believe this.—Ed.

([141]) The late Mr. Coleridge, who had himself "a piece of the leaden planet" in him, was likewise partial to dream-compositions, and has left behind him a very remarkable poem wholly constructed in sleep. It is, however, much superior to what most persons could write when wide awake, and makes one wish the habit of dreaming had been more constant with him.—Ed.

those abstracted and ecstatic souls do walk about in their own corpses as spirits with the bodies they assume, wherein they seem to hear and feel, though indeed the organs are destitute of sense, and their natures of those faculties that should inform them. Thus it is observed, that men sometimes, upon the hour of their departure, do speak and reason above themselves; for then the soul, beginning to be freed from the ligaments of the body, begins to reason like herself, and to discourse in a strain above mortality. ([142])

We term sleep a death, and yet it is waking that kills us and destroys those spirits that are the house of life. It is indeed a part of life that best expresseth death; for every man truly lives, so long as he acts his nature, or some way makes good the faculties of himself: Themistocles,([143]) therefore that slew his soldier in his sleep, was a merciful executioner; it is a kind of punishment the mildness of no laws hath invented; I wonder the fancy of Lucan and Seneca did not discover it. It is that death by which we may be literally said to die daily; a death which Adam died before his mortality; a

([142]) A very eloquent and beautiful passage, which at bottom resembles that of Waller,

> "The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
> Lets in new light through chinks that time has made."—Ed.

([143]) This was not Themistocles but Iphicrates, who, at the siege of Corinth, going his rounds found a sentinel asleep at his post, and pierced him through the heart. On some one's remarking upon his severity, "Why," said he, "I found him asleep, and I have left him so."—Ed.

death whereby we live a middle and moderating point between life and death; in fine, so like death, I dare not trust it without my prayers, and a half adieu unto the world, and take my farewell in a colloquy with God.

The night is come, like to the day;
Depart not thou great God away.
Let not my sins, black as the night,
Eclipse the lustre of thy light.
Keep still in my horizon; for me
The sun makes not the day, but thee.
Thou whose nature cannot sleep,
On my temples sentry keep,
Guard me 'gainst those watchful foes,
Whose eyes are open while mine close.
Let no dreams my head infest,
But such as Jacob's temples blest.
While I do rest, my soul advance,
Make my sleep a holy trance;
That I may, my rest being wrought,
Awake into some holy thought;
And with as active vigour run
My course, as doth the nimble sun.
Sleep is a death; O make me try,
By sleeping, what it is to die;
And as gently lay my head
On my grave, as now my bed.
Howe'er I rest, great God, let me
Awake again at least with thee.
And thus assured, behold I lie
Securely, or to awake or die.
These are my drowsy days; in vain
I do now wake to sleep again:
O come that hour, when I shall never
Sleep again, but wake for ever.

This is the dormative I take to bedward; I need no other laudanum than this to make me sleep: after which, I close mine eyes in security, content

to take my leave of the sun, and sleep unto the resurrection. ([144])

The method I should use in distributive justice, I often observe in commutative; and keep a geometrical proportion in both; whereby becoming equable to others, I become unjust to myself, and supererogate in that common principle, 'Do unto others as thou wouldst be done unto thyself.' I was not born unto riches, neither is it I think my star to be wealthy; or if it were, the freedom of my mind, and frankness of my disposition, were able to contradict and cross my fates. For to me avarice seems not so much a vice, as a deplorable piece of madness; to conceive ourselves urinals, or be persuaded that we are dead, is not so ridiculous or so many degrees beyond the power of hellebore, as this. The opinion of theory, and positions of men, are not so void of reason, as their practised conclusions: some have held that snow is black, that the earth moves, that the soul is air, fire, water; but all this is philosophy, and there is no delirium, if we do but speculate the folly and indisputable dotage of avarice, to that subterraneous idol, and God of the earth. I do confess I am an atheist; I cannot persuade myself to honour what the world adores; whatsoever virtue its prepared substance may have within my body, it hath no influence or operation without; I would not entertain a base design, or an action that should call me villain, for the Indies; and for this only do I love

([144]) A strain of splendid piety.—Ed.

and honour my own soul, and have methinks two arms too few to embrace myself. Aristotle is too severe,([145]) that will not allow us to be truly liberal without wealth, and the bountiful hand of fortune; if this be true, I must confess I am charitable only in my liberal intentions, and bountiful well-wishes. But if the example of the mite be not only an act of wonder, but an example of the noblest charity, surely poor men may also build hospitals, and the rich alone have not erected cathedrals. I have a private method which others observe not; I take the opportunity of myself to do good; I borrow occasion of charity from mine own necessities, and supply the wants of others, when I am in most need myself; for it is an honest stratagem to make advantage of ourselves, and so to husband the acts of virtue, that where they were defective in one circumstance, they may repay their want, and multiply their goodness in another. I have not Peru in my desires, but a competence, and ability to perform those good works, to which he hath inclined my nature. He is rich, who hath enough to be charitable; and it is hard to be so poor, that a noble mind may not find a way to this piece of goodness. He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord; there is more rhetoric in that one sentence, than in a library of sermons; and indeed if those sentences were understood by the reader, with the same emphasis as

([145]) This subject is also discussed in the Rhetoric. I. 5, 6. but the exact passage referred to I have been unable to discover. —Ed.

they are delivered by the author we needed not those volumes of instructions, but might be honest by an epitome. Upon this motive only I cannot behold a beggar without relieving his necessities with my purse, or his soul with my prayers;([146]) these scenical and accidental differences between us cannot make me forget that common and untouched part of us both; there is under these cantos and miserable outsides, these mutilate and semi-bodies, a soul of the same alloy with our own, whose genealogy is God's as well as ours, and is as fair a way to salvation as ourselves. Statists that labour to contrive a commonwealth without our poverty, take away the object of charity, not understanding only the commonwealth of a Christian, but forgetting the prophecy of Christ.

Now there is another part of charity, which is the basis and pillar of this, and that is the love of God,([147]) for whom we love our neighbour; for this I think charity, to love God for himself, and our neighbour for God. All that is truly amiable is God, or, as it were, a divided piece of him, that retains a reflex or shadow of himself. Nor is it strange that we should place affection on that which is invisible: all that we truly love is thus; what we adore under affection of our senses, deserves not the honour of so pure a title. Thus we adore virtue though to the eyes of sense she be invisible: thus

([146]) He was, therefore, no convert to the modern theories on mendicancy.—Ed.

([147]) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself."—Ed.

that part of our noble friends that we love, is not that part that we embrace, but that insensible part that our arms cannot embrace. God being all goodness, can love nothing but himself, and the traduction of his Holy Spirit. Let us call to assize the loves of our parents, the affection of our wives and children, and they are all dumb shows and dreams, without reality, truth, or constancy: for first, there is a strong bond of affection between us and our parents; yet how easily dissolved! We betake ourselves to a woman, forget our mother in a wife, and the womb that bare us, in that that shall bear our image: this woman blessing us with children, our affection leaves the level it held before, and sinks from our bed unto our issue and picture of posterity, where affection holds no steady mansion.([148]) They, growing up in years, desire our ends; or applying themselves to a woman, take a lawful way to love another better than ourselves. Thus I perceive a man may be buried alive, and behold his grave in his own issue.

I conclude therefore and say, there is no happiness under (or as Copernicus will have it, above) the sun, nor any crambe in that repeated verity and burthen of all the wisdom of Solomon, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." There is no felicity in that the world adores. Aristotle, whilst he labours to refute the ideas of Plato, falls upon one himself; for his *summum bonum* is a chimæra, and

([148]) That is, it descends, but does not so truly ascend. However, human nature furnishes splendid examples of the contrary. —Ed.

there is no such thing as his felicity. That wherein God himself is happy, the holy angels are happy, in whose defect the devils are unhappy; that dare I call happiness: whatsoever conduceth unto this, may with an easy metaphor deserve the name; whatsoever else the world terms happiness, is to me a story out of Pliny, a tale of Boccacio or Malaspini; an apparition or neat delusion, wherein there is no more of happiness than the name. Bless me in this life with but peace of my conscience, command of my affections, the love of thyself and my dearest friends, and I shall be happy enough to pity Cæsar. These are, O Lord, the humble desires of my most reasonable ambition, and all I dare call happiness on earth; wherein I set no rule or limit to thy hand of Providence; dispose of me according to the wisdom of thy pleasure. Thy will be done though in my own undoing.

THE END.

OBSERVATIONS

UPON

RELIGIO MEDICI,

BY SIR KENELM DIGBY, KNIGHT.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE EDWARD EARL OF DORSET,

BARON OF BUCKHURST, &c.

My Lord,

I RECEIVED yesternight, your lordship's of the nineteenth current, wherein you are pleased to oblige me, not only by extreme gallant expressions of favour and kindness, but likewise by taking so far into your care the expending of my time, during the tediousness of my restraint, as to recommend to my reading a book, that had received the honour and safeguard of your approbation; for both which I most humbly thank your lordship. And since I cannot in the way of gratefulness express unto your lordship, as I would, those hearty sentiments I have of your goodness to me; I will at the last endeavour, in the way of duty and observance, to let you see how the little needle of my soul is throughly touched at the great loadstone of yours, and followeth suddenly and strongly, which way soever you beckon it. In this occasion, the magnetic motion was impatient to have the book in my hands that your lordship gave so advantageous a character of; whereupon I sent presently (as late as it was) to Paul's church-yard for this favourite of yours, Religio Medici: which after awhile found me in a condition fit to receive a blessing by a visit from any of such masterpieces, as you look upon with gracious eyes;

for I was newly gotten into my bed. This good-natured creature I could easily persuade to be my bed-fellow, and to wake with me as long as I had any edge to entertain myself with the delights I sucked from so noble a conversation. And truly, my lord, I closed not my eyes till I had enriched myself with, or at least exactly surveyed all the treasures that are lapped up in the folds of those few sheets. To return only a general commendation of this curious piece, or at large to admire the author's spirit and smartness, were too perfunctory an account, and too slight a one, to so discerning and steady an eye as yours, after so particular and encharged a summons to read heedfully this discourse. I will therefore presume to blot a sheet or two of paper with my reflections upon sundry passages through the whole context of it, as they shall occur to my remembrance. Which now your lordship knoweth, this packet is not so happy as to carry with it any one expression of my obsequiousness to you. It will be but reasonable, you should even here give over your further trouble of reading, what my respect engageth me to the writing of.

Whose first step is ingenuity and a well-natured evenness of judgment, shall be sure of applause and fair hopes in all men for the rest of his journey. And indeed, my lord, methinketh this gentleman setteth out excellently poised with that happy temper; and showeth a great deal of judicious piety in making a right use of the blind zeal that bigots lose themselves in. Yet I cannot satisfy my doubts thoroughly, how he maketh good his professing to follow the great wheel of the church in matters of divinity; which surely is the solid basis of true religion: for to do so, without jarring against the conduct of the first mover by eccentrical and irregular motions, obligeth one to yield a very dutiful obedience to the determinations of it, without arrogating to one's self a controling ability in liking or misliking the faith, doctrine, and constitutions of that church which one looketh upon as their north star:

whereas, if I mistake not, this author approveth the Church of England, not absolutely, but comparatively with other reformed churches.

My next reflection is concerning what he hath sprinkled (most wittily) in several places concerning the nature and immortality of a human soul, and the condition and state it is in, after the dissolution of the body. And here give me leave to observe what our countryman, Roger Bacon, did long ago; "that those students who busy themselves much with such notions as reside wholly to the fantasy, do hardly ever become idoneous for abstracted, metaphysical speculations; the one having bulky foundation of matter, or of the accidents of it, to settle upon, at the least with one foot: the other flying continually, even to a lessening pitch in the subtle air. And, accordingly, it hath been generally noted, that the exactest mathematicians, who converse altogether with lines, figures, and other differences of quantity, have seldom proved eminent in metaphysics, or speculative divinity. Nor again, the professors of these sciences in the other arts. Much less can it be expected that an excellent physician, whose fancy is always fraught with the material drugs that he prescribeth his apothecary to compound his medicines of, and whose hands are inured to the cutting up, and eyes, to the inspection of anatomised bodies, should easily, and with success, fly his thoughts at so towering a game, as a pure intellect, a separated and unbodied soul." Surely this acute author's sharp wit, had he orderly applied his studies that way, would have been able to satisfy himself with less labour, and others with more plenitude, than it hath been the lot of so dull a brain as mine, concerning the immortality of the soul. And yet, I assure you, my lord, the little philosophy that is allowed me, for my share, demonstrateth this proposition to me, as well as faith delivereth it; which our physician will not admit in his.

To make good this assertion here were very unreasonable; since that to do it exactly (and without ex-

actness, it were not demonstration, requireth a total survey of the whole science of bodies, and of all the operations that we are conversant with, of a rational creature; which I having done with all the succinctness I have been able to explicate so knotty a subject with, hath taken me up in the first draught near two hundred sheets of paper. I shall therefore take leave of this point, with only this note, that I take the immortality of the soul (under his favour) to be of that nature, that to them only that are not versed in the ways of proving it by reason, it is an article of faith; to others, it is an evident conclusion of demonstrative science.

And with a like short note, I shall observe, how if he had traced the nature of the soul from its first principles, he could not have suspected it should sleep in the grave till the resurrection of the body. Nor would he have permitted his compassionative nature to imagine it belonged to God's mercy, (as the Chiliasts did,) to change its condition in those that are damned, from pain to happiness. For where God should have done that, he must have made that anguished soul another creature than what it was; (as to make fire cease from being hot, requireth to have it become another thing than the element of fire;) since that to be in such a condition as maketh us understand damned souls miserable, is a necessary effect of the temper it is in, when it goeth out of the body, and must necessarily (out of its nature) remain in, unvariably for all eternity; though, for the conceptions of the vulgar part of mankind, who are not capable of such abstruse notions, it be styled, and truly too, the sentence and punishment of a severe judge.

I am extremely pleased with him, when he saith, there are not impossibilities enough in religion for an active faith; and no whit less, when in philosophy he will not be satisfied with such naked terms, as in schools use to be obtruded upon easy minds, when the master's fingers are not strong enough to untie the

knots proposed unto them. I confess, when I enquire what light (to use our author's example) is, I should be as well contented with his silence, as with his telling me it is *actus perspicui*, unless he explicate clearly to me, what those words mean, which I find very few go about to do. Such meat they swallow whole and eject it as entire. But were such things scientifically and methodically declared they would be of extreme satisfaction and delight. And that work taketh up the greatest part of my formerly-mentioned treatise. For I endeavour to show by a continued progress, and not by leaps, all the motions of nature; and unto them to fit intelligibly the terms used by her best secretaries; whereby all wild fantastic qualities and moods, introduced for refuges of ignorance, are banished from commerce.

In the next place, my lord, I shall suspect that our author hath not penetrated into the bottom of those conceptions that deep scholars have taught us of eternity; methinketh he taketh it for an infinite extension of time, and a never-ending revolution of continual succession; which is no more like eternity than a gross body is like a pure spirit. Nay, such an infinity of revolutions is demonstrable to be a contradiction, and impossible. In the state of eternity there is no succession, no change, no variety. Souls or angels, in that condition, do not so much as change a thought. All things, notions and actions, that ever were, are, or shall be in any creature, are actually present to such an intellect. And this, my lord, I aver, not as deriving it from theology, and having recourse to beatific vision, to make good my tenet, (for so, only glorified creatures should enjoy such immense knowledge,) but out of the principles of nature and reason, and from thence shall demonstrate it to belong to the lowest soul of the ignorantest wretch whilst he lived in this world, since damned in hell. A bold undertaking, you will say. But I confidently engage myself to it. Upon this occasion occurreth also a great deal to be said of

the nature of predestination, (which by the short touches our author giveth of it, I doubt he quite mistakes,) and how it is an unalterable series and chain of causes, producing infallible, and in respect of them, necessary effects. But that is too large a theme to unfold here; too vast an ocean to describe in the scant map of a letter. And therefore I will refer that to a fitter opportunity, fearing I have already too much trespassed upon your lordship's patience; but that, indeed, I hope you have not had enough to read thus far.

I am sure, my lord, that you, who never forgot any thing which deserved a room in your memory, do remember how we are told, that *abyssus abyssum invocat;* so here our author, from the abyss of predestination, falleth into that of the trinity of persons, consistent with the indivisibility of the divine nature. And out of that, if I be not exceedingly deceived, into a third of mistaking, when he goeth about to illustrate this admirable mystery by a wild discourse of a trinity in our souls. The dint of wit is not forcible enough to dissect such tough matter; wherein all the obscure glimmering we gain of that inaccessible light, cometh to us clothed in the dark weeds of negations, and therefore little can we hope to meet with any positive examples to parallel it withal.

I doubt, he also mistaketh, and imposeth upon the several schools when he intimateth that they gainsay this visible world's being but a picture or shadow of the invisible and intellectual: which manner of philosophising he attributeth to Hermes Trismegistus, but is everywhere to be met with in Plato; and is raised since to a greater height in the Christian schools.

But I am sure he learned in no good school, nor sucked from any good philosophy, to give an actual subsistence and being to first matter without a form. He that will allow that a real existence in nature is as superficially tincted in metaphysics, as another would be in mathematics, that should allow the like to a point, a line, or a superficies in figures; these, in

their strict notions, are but negations of further extension, or but exact terminations of that quantity, which falleth under the consideration of the understanding in the present purpose, no real entities in themselves: so likewise the notions of matter, form, act, power, existence, and the like, that are with truth considered by the understanding, and have there each of them a distinct entity, are nevertheless nowhere by themselves in nature. They are terms which we must use in the negotiations of our thoughts, if we will discourse consequently, and conclude knowingly. But then again, we must be very wary of attributing to things in their own natures such entities as we create in our understandings, when we made pictures of them there; for there every different consideration, arising out of the different impression which the same thing maketh upon us, hath a distinct being by itself. Whereas, in the thing there is but one single unity, that showeth, as it were in a glass, at several positions, those various faces in our understanding. In a word, all these words are but artificial terms, not real things; and the not right understanding of them is the most dangerous rock that scholars suffer shipwreck against.

I go on with our physician's contemplations. Upon every occasion he showeth strong parts, and a vigorous brain. His wishes and aims, and what he pointeth at, speak him owner of a noble and generous heart. He hath reason to wish that Aristotle had been as accurate in examining the causes, nature, and affections of the great universe he busied himself about, as his patriarch Galen hath been in the like considerations upon this little world, man's body, in that admirable work of his "*De Usu Partium.*" But no great human thing was ever born and perfected at once. It may satisfy us, if one in our age buildeth that magnificent structure upon the other's foundations; and especially if, where he findeth any of them unsound, he eradicateth those, and fixeth new unquestionable ones in their room; but so, as they still, in gross,

keep a proportion and bear a harmony with the other great work. This hath now, even now, our learned countryman done; the knowing Mr. White, whose name I believe your lordship hath met withal, in his excellent book "*De Mundo*," newly printed at Paris, where he now resideth, and is admired by the world of lettered men there, as the prodigy of these latter times. Indeed his three dialogues upon that subject, (if I am able to judge anything,) are full of the profoundest learning I ever yet met withal. And I believe, who hath well read and digested them, will persuade himself there is no truth so abstruse, nor hitherto conceived out of our reach, but man's wit may raise engines to scale and conquer. I assure myself, when our author hath studied him thoroughly he will not lament so loud for Aristotle's mutilated and defective philosophy, as in *Boccaline* Cæsar Caporali doth for the loss of Livy's shipwrecked decades.

That logic which he quarreleth at, for calling a toad or serpent ugly, will in the end agree with his; for nobody ever took them to be so, in respect of the universe, (in which regard he defendeth their regularity and symmetry,) but only as they have relation to us.

But I cannot so easily agree with him, where he affirmeth that devils, or other spirits in the intellectual world have no exact ephemerides, wherein they may read beforehand the stories of fortuitous accidents. For I believe that all causes are so immediately chained to their effects, as if a perfect knowing nature get hold but of one link, it will drive the entire series, or pedigree of the whole, to its utmost end; (as I think I have proved in my fore-named treatise;) so that in truth there is no fortuitousness or contingency of things, in respect of themselves, but only in respect of us, that are ignorant of their certain and necessary causes.

Now a little series or chain and complex of all outward circumstances, (whose highest link, poets say prettily, is fastened to Jupiter's chair, and the lowest

is rivetted to every individual on earth,) steered and levelled by God Almighty, at the first setting out of the first mover, I conceive to be that Divine Providence and mercy, which (to use our author's own example) giveth a thriving genius to the Hollanders, and the like; and not any secret, invisible, mystical blessing, that falleth not under the search or cognizance of a prudent indagation.

I must needs approve our author's equanimity, and I may as justly say his magnanimity, in being contented so cheerfully, as he saith, to shake hands with the fading goods of fortune, and be deprived of the joys of her most precious blessing; so that he may in recompense possess, in ample measure, the true ones of the mind; like Epictetus, that master of moral wisdom and piety, who taxeth them of high injustice that repine at God's distribution of his blessings, when he putteth not into their share of goods such things as they use no industry or means to purchase. For why should that man, who above all things esteemeth his own freedom, and who to enjoy that sequestereth himself from commerce with the vulgar of mankind, take it ill of his stars, if such preferments, honours, and applauses meet not him, as are painfully gained, after long and tedious services of princes, and brittle dependencies of humourous favourites, and supple compliances with all sorts of natures? As for what he saith of astrology, I do not conceive that wise men reject it so much for being repugnant to divinity, (which he reconcileth well enough,) as for having no solid rules or ground in nature. To rely too far upon that vain art I judge to be rather folly than impiety, unless in our censure we look to the first origin of it, which savoureth of the idolatry of those heathens, that worshipping the stars and heavenly bodies for deities, did in a superstitious devotion attribute unto them the casualty of all effects beneath them. And for aught I know, the belief of solid orbs in the heavens, and their regularly irregular motions, sprung from the same root. And a like inanity I

should suspect in chiromancy, as well as astrology, (especially in particular contingent effects,) however our author, and no less a man than Aristotle, seem to attribute somewhat more to that conjectural art of lines.

I should much doubt (though our author showeth himself of another mind) that Bernardinus Ochinus grew at the last to a mere atheist; when, after having been first the institutor and patriarch of the Capuchin order, (so violent was his zeal then, as no former religious institution, though never so rigorous, was strict enough for him,) he from thence fell to be first an heretic, then a Jew, and after awhile became a Turk; and at the last wrote a furious invective against those whom he called the three grand impostors of the world, among whom he ranked our Saviour, Christ, as well as Moses and Mahomet. ([149])

I doubt he mistakes in his chronology, or the printer in the name, when he maketh Ptolemy condemn the Alcoran.

He needeth not be so scrupulous, as he seemeth to be, in averring downrightly, that God cannot do contradictory things, (though peradventure it is not amiss to sweeten the manner of the expression, and the sound of the words,) for who understandeth the nature of contradiction will find nonentity in one of the terms, which of God were impiety not to deny peremptorily. For he being in his proper nature self-entity, all being must immediately flow from him, and all not-being be totally excluded from the efflux. Now for the recalling of time past, which the angels posed Esdras withal, there is no contradiction in that, as is evident to them that know the essence of time. For it is but putting again all things that had motion into the same state they were in, at that moment unto which time was to be reduced back, and from thence letting

([149]) This story I have but upon relation, yet of a very good hand.

it travel on again by the same motion, and upon the same wheels it rolled upon before; and therefore God could do this admirable work, though neither Esdras nor all the power of creatures together could do it; and consequently it cannot in this question be said that he posed mortality with what himself was not able to perform.

I acknowledge ingenuously our physician's experience hath the advantage of my philosophy, in knowing there are witches. Yet I am sure I have no temptation to doubt of the Deity; nor have any unsatisfaction in believing there are spirits. I do not see such a necessary conjunction between them, as that the supposition of the one must needs infer the other. Neither do I deny there are witches; I only reserve my assent till I meet with stronger motives to carry it. And I confess I doubt as much of the efficacy of those magical rules he speaketh of, as also of the finding out of mysteries by the courteous revelation of spirits.

I doubt his discourse of an universal spirit is but a wild fancy: and that in the marshalling of it he mistaketh the hermetical philosophers; and surely it is a weak argument, from a common nature, that subsisteth only in our understanding, out of which it hath no being at all, to infer by parity an actual subsistence, or the like, in reality of nature (of which kind of miscarriage in men's discoursings I have spoken before.) And upon this occasion I do not see how seasonably he falleth of a sudden from natural speculations to a moral contemplation of God's Spirit working in us. In which also I would enquire, especially upon his sudden poetical rapture, whether the solidity of the judgment be not outweighed by the airiness of the fancy. Assuredly one cannot err in taking this author for a very fine ingenious gentleman; but for how deep a scholar I leave unto them to judge that are abler than I am.

If he had applied himself with earnest study, and upon right grounds, to search out the nature of pure intellects, I doubt not but his great parts would have

argued more efficaciously than he doth against those, that between men and angels, put only Porphyry's difference of mortality and immortality. And he would have dived further into the tenor of their intellectual operations, in which there is no succession nor ratiocinative discourse; for in the very first instant of their creation they actually knew all that they were capable of knowing, and they are acquainted even with all free thoughts, past, present, and to come; for they see them in their causes, and they see them altogether at one instant; as I have in my fore-mentioned treatise proved at large; and I think I have already touched thus much once before in this letter.

I am tempted here to say a great deal concerning light, by his taking it to be a bare quality. For in physics no speculation is more useful, or reacheth further; but to set down such phenomenas of it as I have observed, and from whence I evidently collect the nature of it, were too large a theme for this place. When your lordship pleaseth I shall show you another more orderly discourse upon that subject, wherein I have sufficiently proved it to be a solid substance and body.

In his proceeding to collect an intellectual world, and in his discoursing upon the place and habitation of angels, as also in his consideration of the activity of glorified eyes, which shall be in the state of rest, whereas motion is required to seeing: and in his subtle speculation upon two bodies, placed in the vacuity, beyond the utmost, all-enclosing superficies of heaven, (which implieth a contradiction in nature,) methinks I hear Apelles cry out *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*, or rather, it putteth me in mind of one of the titles in Pantagruel's library, (which he expresseth himself conversant in,) namely, *Quæstio subtilissima, utrum chimæra in vacuo bombinans possit comedere secundas intentiones;* with which short note I will leave these considerations, in which, if time and other circumstances allowed it, matter would spring up of excellent learning.

When our author shall have read Mr. White's "Dialogue of the World," he will no longer be of the opinion, that the unity of the world is a conclusion of faith; for it is there demonstrated by reason.

Here the thread of the discourse inviteth me to say a great deal of the production or creation of man's soul; but it is too tedious and too knotty a piece for a letter. Now it shall suffice to note, that it is not *ex traduce*, and yet hath a strange kind of near dependence of the body, which is, as it were, God's instrument to create it by. This, thus said, or rather tumbled out, may seem harsh. But had your lordship leisure to peruse what I have written at full upon this point, I doubt not but it would appear plausible enough to you.

I cannot agree with him, when he seemeth to impute inconvenience to long life, and that length of time doth rather impair than improve us: for surely, if we will follow the course of nature and of reason, it is a mighty great blessing, were it but in this regard, that it giveth time leave to vent and boil away the unquietnesses and turbulencies that follow our passions, and to wean ourselves gently from carnal affections, and at the last to drop with ease and willingness, like ripe fruit from the tree; as I remember Plotinus finely discourseth in one of his Eneads. For when, before the season, it is plucked off with violent hands, or shaken down by rude and boisterous winds, it carrieth along with it an undigested raw taste of the wood, and hath an unpleasant aigerness in its juice, that maketh it unfit for use, till long time hath mellowed it. And peradventure it may be so backward, as instead of ripening it may grow rotten in the very centre. In like manner, souls that go out of their bodies with affection to those objects they leave behind them, (which usually is as long as they can relish them,) do retain still even in their separation a bias and a languishing towards them, which is the reason why such terrene souls appear oftenest in cemeteries and charnel houses, and not that moral one which our author giveth. For life,

which is union with the body, being that which carnal souls have straitest affection to, and that they are loathest to be separated from, their unquiet spirit, which can never (naturally) lose the impressions it had wrought in it at the time of its driving out, lingereth perpetually after that dear consort of his. The impossibility cannot cure them of their impotent desires; they would fain be alive again.

> ——— "Iterumque ad tarda reverti
> Corpora. Quæ lucis miseris tam dira cupido."

And to this cause, peradventure, may be reduced the strange effect, which is frequently seen in England, when, at the approach of the murderer, the slain body suddenly bleedeth afresh: for certainly, the souls of them that are treacherously murdered by surprise use to leave their bodies with extreme unwillingness, and with vehement indignation against them, that force them to so unprovided and abhorred a passage. That soul then, to wreak its evil talent against the hated murderer, and to draw a just and desired revenge upon his head, would do all it can to manifest the author of the fact. To speak it cannot, for in itself it wanteth organs of voice, and those it is parted from are now grown too heavy, and are too benumbed for it to give motion unto. Yet some change it desireth to make in the body, which it hath so vehement inclinations to, and therefore is the aptest for it to work upon. It must then endeavour to cause a motion in the subtlest and most fluid parts (and consequently the most moveable ones) of it. This can be nothing but the blood, which then being violently moved must needs gush out at those places where it findeth issues.

Our author cannot believe that the world will perish upon the ruins of its own principles; but Mr. White hath demonstrated the end of it upon natural reason: and though the precise time for that general destruction be inscrutable, yet he learnedly showeth an ingenious rule, whereby to measure in some sort the dura-

tion of it, without being branded (as our author threateneth) with convincible and statute-madness, or with impiety. And whereas he will have the work of this last great day (the summer-up of all past days) to imply annihilation, and thereupon interesseth God only in it, I must beg leave to contradict him, namely in this point, and to affirm, that the letting loose then of the most active element, to destroy this face of the world, will but beget a change in it, and that no annihilation can proceed from God Almighty; for his essence being, as I said before, self-existence, it is more impossible that not-being should flow from him, than that cold should flow immediately from fire, or darkness from the actual presence of light.

I must needs acknowledge, that where he balanceth life and death against one another, and considereth that the latter is to be a kind of nothing for a moment, to become a pure spirit within one instant, and what followeth of this strong thought, is extremely handsomely said, and argueth very gallant and generous resolutions in him.

To exemplify the immortality of the soul, he needeth not have recourse to the philosopher's-stone; his own store furnisheth him with a most pregnant one of reviving a plant (the same numerical plant) out of his own ashes. But under his favour I believe his experiment will fail, if, under the notion of the same, he comprehendeth all the accidents that first accompanied that plant; for since in the ashes there remaineth only the fixed salt, I am very confident that all the colour and much of the odour and taste of it is flown away with the volatile salt.

What should I say of his making so particular a narration of personal things, and private thoughts of his own, the knowledge whereof cannot much conduce to any man's betterment? (which I make account is the chief end of his writing this discourse.) As where he speaketh of the soundness of his body, of the course of his diet, of the coolness of his blood at the summer-

solstice of his age, of his neglect of an epitaph; how long he hath lived, or may live; what popes, emperors, kings, grand seigniors he hath been contemporary unto, and the like. Would it not be thought that he hath a special good opinion of himself, (and indeed he hath reason,) when he maketh such great princes the landmarks in the chronology of himself? Surely, if he were to write by retail the particulars of his own story and life, it would be a notable romance, since he telleth us in one total sum it is a continued miracle of thirty years. Though he creepeth gently upon us at the first, yet he groweth a giant, an Atlas (to use his own expression) at the last. But I will not censure him, as he that made notes upon Balsac's letters, and was angry with him for vexing his readers with stories of his cholics and voiding of gravel. I leave this kind of expressions without looking further into them.

In the next place, my lord, I shall take occasion, from our author's setting so main a difference between moral honesty and virtue, or being virtuous (to use his own phrase) out of an inbred loyalty to virtue; and on the other side, being virtuous for a reward's sake, to discourse a little concerning virtue in this life, and the effects of it afterwards. Truly, my lord, however he seemeth to prefer this latter, I cannot but value the other much before it, if we regard the nobleness and heroicness of the nature and mind from whence they both proceed. And if we consider the journey's end, to which each of them carrieth us, I am confident the first yieldeth nothing to the second, but indeed both meet in the period of beatitude. To clear this point, (which is very well worth the wisest man's serious thought) we must consider what it is that bringeth us to this excellent state, to be happy in the other world of eternity and immutability. It is agreed on all hands to be God's grace and favour to us: but all do not agree by what steps his grace produceth this effect. Herein I shall not trouble your lordship with a long discourse, how that grace worketh in us, (which

yet I will in a word touch anon, that you may conceive what I understand grace to be,) but will suppose it to have wrought its effect in us in this life, and from thence examine what hinges they are that turn us over to beatitude and glory in the next. Some consider God as a judge, that rewardeth or punisheth men, according as they co-operated with, or repugned to, the grace he gave. That according as their actions please or displease him, he is well affected towards them, or angry with them; and accordingly maketh them to the purpose and very home, feel the effects of his kindness or indignation. Others that fly a higher pitch, and are so happy,

——"Ut rerum poterint cognoscere causas,"

do conceive that beatitude and misery in the other life are effects that necessarily and orderly flow out of the nature of those causes that begot them in this life, without engaging God Almighty to give a sentence, and act the part of a judge, according to the state of our cause, as it shall appear upon the accusations and pleadings at his great bar; much of which manner of expression is metaphorical, and rather adapted to contain vulgar minds in their duties, that are awed with the thought of a severe judge, sifting every minute action of theirs, than such as we must conceive every circumstance to pass so in reality, as the literal sound of the words seems to infer in ordinary construction: and yet all that is too true, in its genuine sense. But, my lord, these more penetrating men, and that, I conceive, are virtuous upon higher and stronger motives, (for they truly and solidly know why they are so,) do consider, that what impressions are once made in the spiritual substance of a soul, and what affections it hath once contracted, do ever remain in it till a contrary and diametrically contradicting judgment and affection do obliterate it, and expel it thence. This is the reason why contrition, sorrow, and hatred for sins past is encharged us. If then the soul do go out of the

body with impressions and affections to the objects and pleasures of this life, it continually lingereth after them; and as Virgil (learnedly, as well as wittily) saith,

> —— "Quæ gratia currum,
> Armorumque fuit vivis, quæ cura nitentes,
> Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos."

But that being a state wherein those objects neither are nor can be enjoyed, it must needs follow that such a soul must be in an exceeding anguish, sorrow, and affliction for being deprived of them; and for want of that it so much prizeth will neglect all other contentments it might have, as not having a relish or taste moulded and prepared to the savouring of them; but like feverish tongues, that when they are even scorched with heat take no delight in the most pleasing liquors, but the sweetest drinks seem bitter to them, by reason of their overflowing gall; so they even hate whatsoever good is in their power, and thus pine away a long eternity; in which the sharpness and activity of their pain, anguish, and sad condition is to be measured by the sensibleness of their natures; which being then spiritual is in a manner infinitely more than any torment that in this life can be inflicted upon a dull, gross body. To this add the vexation it must be to them, to see how inestimable and infinite a good they have lost, and lost merely by their own fault and for momentary trifles and children's play; and that it was so easy for them to have gained it, had they remained but in their right senses, and governed themselves according unto reason. And then judge in what a tortured condition they must be of remorse, and execrating themselves for their most re-supine and senseless madness. But if, on the other side, a soul be released out of this prison of clay and flesh, with affections settled upon intellectual goods, as truth, knowledge, and the like; and that it be grown to an irksome dislike of the flat pleasures of this world, and look upon carnal and sen-

sual objects with a disdainful eye, as discerning the contemptible inanity in them, that is set off only by their painted outside; and above all, that it hath a longing desire to be in the society of that supereminent Cause of causes, in which they know are heaped up the treasures of all beauty, knowledge, truth, delight, and good whatsoever; and therefore are impatient at the delay, and reckon all their absence from him as a tedious banishment; and in that regard hate their life and body as cause of this divorce. Such a soul, I say, must necessarily, by reason of the temper it is wrought into, enjoy immediately at the instant of the body's dissolution, and its liberty, more contentment, more joy, more true happiness than it is possible for a heart of flesh to have scarce any scantling of, much less to comprehend.

For immense knowledge is natural to it, as I have touched before. Truth, which is the adequated and satisfying object of the understanding, is there displayed in her own colours, or rather without any.

And that which is the crown of all, and in respect of which all the rest is nothing; that Infinite Entity, which above all things this soul thirsteth to be united unto, cannot for his own goodness' sake, deny his embraces to so affectionate a creature, and to such an inflamed love. If he should, then were that soul, for being the best, and for loving him most, condemned to be the unhappiest. For what joy could she have in anything, were she barred from what she so infinitely loveth? But since the nature of superior and excellent things is to shower down their propitious influences, wheresoever there is a capacity of receiving them, and no obstacle to keep them out, like the sun that illuminateth the whole air, if no cloud, or solid opacous body intervene, it followeth clearly, that this infinite sun of justice, this immense ocean of goodness, cannot choose but environ with his beams, and replenish even beyond satiety with his delightsome waters, a soul so prepared and tempered to receive them.

Now, my lord, to make use of this discourse, and apply

it to what begot it, be pleased to determine which way will deliver us evenest and smoothest to this happy end of our journey: to be virtuous for hope of a reward, and through fear of punishment; or to be so out of a natural and inward affection to virtue, for virtue's and reason's sake? Surely one in this latter condition, not only doth those things which will bring him to beatitude; but he is so secured, in a manner, under an armour of proof, that he is almost invulnerable: he can scarce miscarry, he hath not so much as an inclination to work contrarily; the alluring baits of this world tempt him not; he disliketh, he hateth, even his necessary commerce with them whilst he liveth. On the other side, the hireling that steereth his course by his reward and punishment, doth well, I confess; but he doth it with reluctance; he carrieth the ark, God's image, his soul, safely home, it is true, but he loweth pitifully after his calves, that he leaveth behind him among the Philistines. In a word, he is virtuous; but if he might safely, he would do vicious things (and hence be the ground in nature, if so I might say, of our purgatory.) Methinks two such minds may not unfitly be compared to two maids, whereof one hath a little sprinkling of the green-sickness, and hath more mind to ashes, chalk or leather, than meats of solid and good nourishment, but forbeareth them, knowing the languishing condition of health it will bring her to. But the other having a ruddy, vigorous and perfect constitution, and enjoying a complete entire encrasie, delights in no food but of good nouriture, and loaths the other delights. Her health is discovered in her looks, and she is secure from any danger of that malady, whereas the other, for all her good diet, beareth in her complexion some sickly testimony of her depraved appetite: and if she be not very wary, she is in danger of a relapse.

It falleth fit in this place to examine our author's apprehension of the end of such honest worthies and philosophers (as he calleth them) that died before Christ's

incarnation, whether any of them could be saved, or no? Truly, my lord, I make no doubt at all but if any followed in the whole tenor of their lives, the dictamens of right reason, but that their journey was secure to heaven. Out of the former discourse appeareth what temper of mind is necessary to get thither. And, that reason would dictate such a temper to a perfectly judicious man, (though but in the state of nature,) as the best and most rational for him, I make no doubt at all. But it is most true, they are exceeding few, if any, in whom reason worketh clearly, and is not overswayed by passion and terrene affections; they are few that can discern what is reasonable to be done in every circumstance.

——— "Pauci, quos æquus amavit
Jupiter, aut ardens evixit ad æthera virtus,
Diis geniti, potuere." ——

And fewer, that knowing what is best, can win of themselves to do accordingly; *(video meliora proboque deteriora sequor*, being most men's cases;) so that after all that can be expected at the hands of nature and reason in their best habit, since the lapse of them, we may conclude it would have been a most difficult thing for any man, and a most impossible one for mankind, to attain unto beatitude, if Christ had not come to teach, and by his example to show us the way.

And this was the reason of his incarnation, teaching life and death. For being God, we could not doubt his veracity, when he told us news of the other world; having all things in his power, and yet enjoying none of the delights of this life, no man should stick at foregoing them, since his example showeth all men, that such a course is best, whereas few are capable of the reason of it: and for his last act, dying in such an afflicted manner; he taught us how the securest way to step immediately into perfect happiness, is to be crucified to all the desires, delights and contentments of this world.

But to come back to our physician. Truly, my lord, I must needs pay him, as a due, the acknowledging his pious discourses to be excellent and pathetical ones, containing worthy motives to incite one to virtue, and to deter one from vice; thereby to gain heaven, and to avoid hell. Assuredly he is owner of a solid head, and of a strong generous heart. Where he employeth his thoughts upon such things as resort to no higher, or more abstruse principles, than such as occur in ordinary conversation with the world, or in the common track of study and learning, I know no man would say better. But when he meeteth with such difficulties as his next, concerning the resurrection of the body, wherein, after deep meditation upon the most abstracted principles and speculations of the metaphysics, one hath much ado to solve the appearing contradictions in nature, there I do not at all wonder he should tread a little awry, and go astray in the dark: for I conceive his course of life hath not permitted him to allow much time unto the unwinding of such entangled and abstracted subtleties. But if it had, I believe his natural parts are such, as he might have kept the chair from most men I know: for even where he roveth widest, it is with so much wit and sharpness, as putteth me in mind of a great man's censure upon Joseph Scaliger's Cyclometrica, a matter he was not well versed in; that he had rather err so ingeniously as he did, than hit upon truth in that heavy manner, as the Jesuit, his antagonist, stuffeth his books. Most assuredly his wit and smartness in this discourse is of the finest standard, and his insight into severer learning, will appear as piercing unto such as use not strictly the touchstone and the test to examine every piece of glittering coin he payeth his reader with. But to come to the resurrection. Methinks it is but a gross conception, to think that every atom of the present individual matter of a body, every grain of ashes of a burned cadaver, scattered by the wind throughout the world, and, after numerous variations, changed peradven-

ture into the body of another man, should at the sounding of the last trumpet be raked together again from all the corners of the earth, and be made up anew into the same body it was before of the first man. Yet if we will be Christians, and rely upon God's promises, we must believe that we shall rise again with the same body that walked about, did eat, drink, and live here on earth; and that we shall see our Saviour and Redeemer with the same, the very same eyes, wherewith we now look upon the fading glories of this contemptible world.

How shall these seeming contrarieties be reconciled? If the latter be true, why should not the former be admitted? To explicate this riddle the better, give me leave to ask your lordship, if you now see the cannons, the ensigns, the arms, and other martial preparations at Oxford, with the same eyes wherewith many years agone you looked upon Porphyry's and Aristotle's leases there? I doubt not but you will answer me, assuredly with the very same. Is that noble and graceful person of yours, that begetteth both delight and reverence in every one that looketh upon it; is that body of yours, that now is grown to such comely and full dimensions, as nature can give her none more advantageous, the same person, the same body, which your virtuous and excellent mother bore nine months in her chaste and honoured womb, and that your nurse gave suck unto? Most certainly it is the same. And yet if you consider it well, it cannot be doubted, but that sublunary matter, being in a perpetual flux, and in bodies which have internal principles of heat and motion, much continually transpiring out to make room for the supply of new aliment; at the length, in long process of time, all is so changed, as that ship at Athens may as well be called the same ship that was there two hundred years before, and whereof, by reason of the continual reparations, not one foot of the timber is remaining in her that builded her at the first, as this body now can be called the same it was forty years agone, unless some higher considera-

tion keep up the identity of it. Now what that is, let us examine, and whether or no it will reach to our difficulty of the resurrection. Let us consider, then, how that which giveth the numerical individuation to a body is the substantial form. As long as that remaineth the same, though the matter be in a continual flux and motion, yet the thing is still the same. There is not one drop of the same water in the Thames, that ran down by Whitehall yesternight; yet no man will deny, but that is the same river that was in Queen Elizabeth's time, as long as it is supplied from the same common stock, the sea. Though this example reacheth not home, it illustrateth the thing. If then the form remain absolutely the same after separation from the matter, that it was in the matter, (which can happen only to forms that subsist by themselves, as human souls,) it followeth then, that whensoever it is united to matter again, all matter coming out of the same common magazine, it maketh again the same man, with the same eyes, and all the same limbs that were formerly. Nay, he is composed of the same individual matter, for it hath the same distinguisher and individuator, to whit, the same form or soul. Matter, considered singly by itself, hath no distinction: all matter is in itself the same; we must fancy it, as we do the indigested chaos; it is a uniformly wide ocean. Particularize a few drops of the sea, by filling a glassfull of them, then that glassfull is distinguished from all the rest of the watery bulk. But return back those few drops to from whence they were taken, and the glassfull that even now had an individuation by itself, loseth that, and groweth one and the same with the other main stock. Yet if you fill your glass again, wheresoever you take it up, so it be of the same uniform bulk of water you had before, it is the same glassfull of water that you had. But as I said before, this example fitteth entirely, no more than the other did. In such abstracted speculations, where we must consider matter without form, which hath no actual being, we must not expect adequated examples

in nature. But enough is said to make a speculative man see, that if God should join the soul of a lately dead man, (even whilst his dead corpse should lie entire in his winding-sheet here,) unto a body made of earth, taken from some mountain in America, it were most true and certain, that the body he should then lie by were the same identical body he lived with before his death, and late resurrection. It is evident that sameness, thisness, and thatness, belongeth not to matter by itself, for a general indifference runneth through it all, but only as it is distinguished and individuated by the form; which, in our case, whensoever the same soul doth, it must be understood always to be the same matter and body.

This point thus passed over, I may piece to it what our author saith of a magazine of subsistent forms, residing first in the chaos, and hereafter, when the world shall have been destroyed by fire, in the general heap of ashes, out of which God's voice did, and shall draw them out, and clothe them with matter. This language were handsome for a poet or rhetorician to speak; but in a philosopher that should ratiocinate strictly and rigorously, I cannot admit it; for certainly there are no subsistent forms of corporeal things, excepting the soul of man, which besides being an informing form hath another particular consideration belonging to it, too long to speak of here. But whensoever that compound is destroyed the form perisheth with the whole. And for the natural production of corporeal things, I conceive it to be wrought out by the action and passion of the elements among themselves, which introducing new tempers and dispositions into the bodies where these conflicts pass, new forms succeed old ones, when the dispositions are raised to such a height as can no longer consist with the preceding form, and are in the immediate degree to fit the succeeding one which they usher in. The mystery of all which, I have at large unfolded in my above-mentioned treatise of the "Immortality of the Soul."

I shall say no more to the first part of our phy-

sician's discourse, after I have observed how his consequence is no good one, where he inferreth, that if the devils foreknew who would be damned or saved, it would save them the labour, and end their work of tempting mankind to mischief and evil. For whatsoever their moral design and success be in it, their nature impelleth them to be always doing it; for on the one side it is active in the highest degree, (as being pure acts, that is, spirits,) so on the other side they are malign in as great an excess. By the one they must be always working, wheresoever they may work, (like water in a vessel full of holes, that will run out of every one of them which is not stopped;) by the other, their whole work must be malicious and mischievous. Joining then both these qualities together, it is evident they will always be tempting mankind, though they know they shall be frustrate of their moral end.

But were it not time that I made an end? Yes, it is more than time; and therefore having once passed the limit that confined what was becoming, the next step carried me into the ocean of error, which being infinite, and therefore more or less bearing no proportion in it, I will proceed a little further, to take a short survey of his Second Part, and hope for as easy pardon after this addition to my sudden and undigested remarks, as if I had enclosed them up now.

Methinks he beginneth with somewhat an affected discourse, to prove his natural inclination to charity, which virtue is the intended theme of all the remainder of his discourse; and I doubt he mistaketh the lowest orb or limb of that high seraphic virtue for the top and perfection of it, and maketh a kind of human compassion to be divine charity. He will have it to be a general way of doing good. It is true, he addeth then, for God's sake; but he allayeth that again with saying, he will have that good done, as by obedience, and to accomplish God's will, and looketh at the effects it worketh upon our souls but in a narrow compass; like one in the vulgar throng, that considereth God as a judge, and as a rewarder or a punisher. Whereas

perfect charity is that vehement love of God for his own sake, for his goodness, for his beauty, for his excellency, that carrieth all the motions of our soul directly and violently to him, and maketh a man disdain, or rather hate all obstacles that may retard his journey to him. And that face of it that looketh toward mankind with whom we live, and warmeth us to do others good, is but like the overflowing of the main stream, that swelling above its banks, runneth over in a multitude of little channels.

I am not satisfied that in the likeness which he putteth between God and man, he maketh the difference between them to be but such as between two creatures that resemble one another; for between these there is some proportion, but between the others none at all. In the examining of which discourse, wherein the author observeth, that no two faces are ever seen to be perfectly alike; nay, no two pictures of the same face were exactly made so, I could take occasion to insert a subtle and delightful demonstration of Mr. White's, wherein he showeth how it is impossible that two bodies (for example, two bowls) should ever be made exactly like one another; nay, not rigorously equal in any one accident, as namely in weight, but that still there will be some little difference and inequality between them (the reason of which observation our author meddled not with) were it not that I have been so long already, as digressions were now very unseasonable.

Shall I commend or censure our author for believing so well of his acquired knowledge, as to be dejected at the thought of not being able to leave it a legacy among his friends? Or shall I examine whether it be not a high injury to wise and gallant princes, who out of the generousness and nobleness of their nature do patronize arts and learned men, to impute their so doing to vanity of desiring praise, or to fear of reproach?

But let these pass. I will not engage any that may

befriend him in a quarrel against him; but I may safely produce Epictetus to contradict him, when he letteth his kindness engulf him in deep afflictions for a friend; for he will not allow his wise man to have an inward relenting, a troubled feeling, or compassion of another's misfortunes—that disordereth the one without any good to the other. Let him afford all the assistances and relievings in his power, but without intermingling himself in other's woe; as angels that do us good, but have no passion for us. But this gentleman's kindness goeth yet further; he compareth his love of a friend to his love of God—the union of friends' souls, by affection, to the union of the three Persons in the Trinity, and to the hypostatical union of two natures in one Christ, by the words incarnation. Most certainly he expresseth himself to be a right good-natured man. But if St. Augustine retracted so severely his pathetical expressions for the death of his friend, saying, "They savoured more of the rhetorical declamations of a young orator, than of the grave confession of a devout Christian," (or somewhat to that purpose,) what censure upon himself may we expect of our physician, if ever he make any retraction of this discourse concerning his religion!

It is no small misfortune to him, that after so much time spent, and so many places visited in a curious search, by travelling after the acquisition of so many languages, after the wading so deep in sciences, as appeareth by the ample inventory and particular he maketh of himself, the result of all this should be, to profess ingenuously he had studied enough, only to become a sceptic, and that having run through all sorts of learning he could find rest and satisfaction in none. This, I confess, is the unlucky fate of those that light upon wrong principles; but Mr. White teacheth us how the theorems and demonstrations of physics may be linked and chained together, as strongly and as continuedly as they are in the mathematics, if men would but apply themselves to a right method of study.

And I do not find that Solomon complained of ignorance in the height of knowledge, (as this gentleman saith,) but only, that after he hath rather acknowledged himself ignorant of nothing, but that he understood the natures of all plants, from the cedar to the hyssop, and was acquainted with all the ways and paths of wisdom and knowledge, he exclaimeth, that all this is but "toil and vexation of spirit;" and therefore adviseth men to change human studies into divine contemplations and affections.

I cannot agree to his resolution of shutting his books, and giving over the search of knowledge, and resigning himself up to ignorance, upon the reason that moveth him, as though it were extreme vanity to waste our days in the pursuit of that, which by attending but a little longer, (till death hath closed the eyes of our body, to open those of our soul,) we shall gain with ease, we shall enjoy by infusion, and is an accessory of our glorification. It is true, as soon as death hath played the midwife to our second birth, our soul shall then see all truths more freely than our corporeal eyes at our first birth see all bodies and colours by the natural power of it, as I have touched already, and not only upon the grounds our author giveth. Yet far be it from us to think that time lost, which in the mean season we shall laboriously employ, to warm ourselves with blowing a few little sparks of that glorious fire, which we shall afterwards, in one instant, leap into the middle of, without danger of scorching; and that for two important reasons, besides several others too long to mention here; the one, for the great advantage we have by learning in this life; the other, for the huge contentment that the acquisition of it here (which applieth a strong affection to it) will be unto us in the next life. The want of knowledge in our first mother, which exposed her to be easily deceived by the serpent's cunning, was the root of all our ensuing misery and woe. It is true (which we are taught by irrefragable authority) that *omnis peccans ignorat:* and the

well-head of all the calamities and mischiefs in all the world, consisteth of the troubled and bitter waters of ignorance, folly, and rashness; to cure which the only remedy and antidote is the salt of true learning, the bitter wood of study, painful meditation, and orderly consideration. I do not mean such study as armeth wrangling champions for clamorous schools, where the ability of subtle disputing to and fro, is more prized than the retrieving of truth; but such as filleth the mind with solid and useful notions, and doth not endanger the swelling it up with windy vanities. Besides, the sweetest companion and entertainment of a well-tempered mind is to converse familiarly with the naked and bewitching beauties of those mistresses, those verities and sciences, which, by fair courting of them, they gain and enjoy; and every day bring new fresh ones to their seraglio, where the most ancient never grow old old or stale. Is there any thing so pleasing or so profitable as this?

> ——"Nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere
> Edita doctrina sapientum templa serena;
> Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre
> Errare, atque viam palanteis quærere vitæ."

But now if we consider the advantage we shall have in the other life by our affection to sciences, and conversation with them in this, it is wonderful great. Indeed that affection is so necessary, as without it we shall enjoy little contentment in all the knowledge we shall then be replenished with: for every one's pleasure in the possession of a good is to be measured by his precedent desire of that good, and by the equality of the taste and relish of him that feedeth upon it. We should therefore prepare and make our taste beforehand by assuefaction unto, and by often relishing what we shall then be nourished with. That Englishman that can drink nothing but beer or ale, would be ill bestead were he to go into Spain or Italy, where nothing but wine groweth: whereas a well experienced goinfre,

that can criticise upon the several tastes of liquors, would think his palate in paradise, among those delicious nectars (to use Aretine's phrase upon his eating of a lamprey.) Who was ever delighted with tobacco the first time he took it? And who could willingly be without it, after he was awhile habituated to the use of it; how many examples are there daily of young men, that marrying upon their father's command, not through precedent affections of their own, have little comfort in worthy and handsome wives, that others would passionately affect? Archimedes lost his life, for being so ravished with the delight of a mathematical demonstration, that he could not of a sudden recall his extacied spirits to attend the rude soldiers' summons. But instead of him, whose mind hath been always fed with such subtle diet, how many plain country-gentlemen doth your lordship and I know that rate the knowledge of their husbandry at a much higher pitch; and are extremely delighted by conversing with that, whereas the other would be most tedious and importune to them? We may then safely conclude, that if we will joy in the knowledge we shall have after death, we must in our lifetime raise within ourselves earnest affections to it, and desires of it, which cannot be barren ones, but will press upon us to gain some knowledge by way of advance here: and the more we attain unto the more we shall be in love with what remaineth behind. To this reason then adding the other, how knowledge is the surest prop and guide of our present life, and how it perfecteth a man in that which constituteth a man, his reason, and how it enableth him to tread boldly, steadily, constantly, and knowingly in all his ways; and I am confident, all men that shall hear the case thus debated, will join with me in making it a suit to our physician, that he will keep his books open, and continue that progress he hath so happily begun.

But I believe your lordship will scarcely join with him in his wish, that we might procreate and beget children without the help of women, or without any con-

junction or commerce with that sweet and bewitching sex. Plato taxeth his fellow-philosopher, though otherwise a learned and brave man, for not sacrificing to the graces, those gentle female goddesses. What thinketh your lordship of our physician's bitter censure of that action which Mahomet maketh the essence of his paradise? Indeed, besides those, his unkindnesses, or rather frowardnesses, at that tender-hearted sex, which must needs take it ill at his hands, methinketh he setteth marriage at too low a rate, which is assuredly the highest and divinest link of human society. And where he speaketh of Cupid, and of beauty, it is in such a phrase, as putteth me in mind of the learned Greek reader in Cambridge courting of his mistress out of Stephens's Thesaurus.

My next observation upon his discourse, draweth me to a logical consideration of the nature of an exact syllogism; which kind of reflection, though it use to open the door in the course of learning and study, yet it will near shut it in my discourse, which my following the thread that my author spinneth, assigneth to this place. If he had well and thoroughly considered all that is required to that strict way of managing our reason, he would not have censured Aristotle for condemning the fourth figure, out of no other motive but because it was not consonant to his own principle; that it would not fit with the foundations himself had laid; though it do with reason, saith he, and be consonant to that, which indeed it doth not, at all times, and in all circumstances. In a perfect syllogism the predicate must be identified with the subject, and each extreme with the middle term, and so consequently, all three with one another. But in Galen's fourth figure the case may so fall out as these rules will not be current there.

As for the good and excellency that he considereth in the worst things, and how far from solitude any man is in a wilderness; these are, in his discourse, but equivocal considerations of good and of lowliness. Nor are

they any ways pertinent to the morality of that part where he treateth of them.

I have much ado to believe, what he speaketh confidently, that he is more beholden to Morpheus for learned and rational, as well as pleasing dreams, than to Mercury for smart and facetious conceptions; whom Saturn (it seemeth by his relation) hath looked asquint upon in his geniture.

In his concluding prayer, wherein he summeth up all he wisheth, methinketh his arrow is not winged with that fire which I should have expected from him upon this occasion. For it is not the peace of conscience, nor the bridling up of one's affections, that expresseth the highest delightfulness and happiest state of a perfect Christian. It is love only that can give us heaven upon earth, as well as in heaven, and bringeth us thither too: so that the Tuscan Virgil had reason to say,

—— "In alte dolcezze
Non si puo gioio, se non amando."

And this love must be employed upon the noblest and highest object, not terminated in our friends. But of this transcendent and divine part of charity, that looketh directly and immediately upon God himself; and that is the intrinsical form, the utmost perfection, the scope and final period of true religion, this gentleman's intended theme, as I conceive, I have no occasion to speak any thing, since my author doth but transiently mention it; and that, too, in such a phrase as ordinary catechisms speak of to vulgar capacities.

Thus, my lord, having run through the book, God knows how slightly, upon so great a sudden, which your lordship commanded me to give you an account of, there remaineth yet a weightier task upon me to perform, which is to excuse myself of presumption, for daring to consider any moles in that face which you had marked for a beauty. But who shall well consider my manner of proceeding in these remarks, will free

me from that censure. I offer not at judging the prudence and wisdom of this discourse. These are fit inquiries for your lordship's court of highest appeal: in my inferior one, I meddle only with little knotty pieces of particular sciences *(matinæ apis instar, operosa parvus carmina fingit.)* In which it were peradventure a fault for your lordship to be too well versed; your employments are of a higher and nobler strain, and that concerns the welfare of millions of men:

> "Tu regere imperio populos (Sackville) memento,
> Hæ tibi erunt artes, pacisque imponere morem."

Such little studies as these, belong only to those persons that are low in the rank they hold in the common wealth, low in their conceptions, and low in a languishing and rusting leisure, such a one as Virgil calleth *ignobile otium*, and such an one as I am now dulled withal. If Alexander or Cæsar should have commended a tract of land, as fit to fight a battle in for the empire of the world, or to build a city upon, to be the magazine and staple of all the adjacent countries, nobody could justly condemn that husbandman, who, according to his own narrow art and rules, should censure the plains of Arbella or Pharsalia, for being in some places sterile; or the meadows about Alexandria, for being sometimes subject to be overflown; or could tax ought he should say in that kind for a contradiction unto the other's commendations of those places which are built upon higher and larger principles.

So, my lord, I am confident I shall not be reproached of unmannerliness for putting in a demurrer unto a few little particularities in that noble discourse, which your lordship gave a general applause unto, and by doing so I have given your lordship the best account I can of myself, as well as of your commands. You hereby see what my entertainments are, and how I play away my time.

> —— "Dorset dum magnus ad altum
> Fulminat Oxonium bello, victorque volentes
> Per populos dat jura; viamque affectat Olympo."

May your counsels there be happy and successful ones, to bring about that peace, which if we be not quickly blessed withal, a general ruin threateneth the whole kingdom.

From Winchester-house, the 22nd, (I think I may say the 23rd, for I am sure it is morning, and I think it is day,) of December, 1642.

Your lordship's most humble
and obedient Servant,
KENELM DIGBY.

THE POSTSCRIPT.

MY LORD,

LOOKING over these loose papers to point them, I perceive I have forgotten what I promised in the eighth sheet, to touch in a word concerning grace. I do not conceive it to be a quality infused by God Almighty into a soul.

Such kind of discoursing satisfieth me no more in divinity, than in philosophy. I take it to be the whole complex of such real motives, as a solid account may be given of them, that incline a man to virtue and piety, and are set on foot by God's particular grace and favour, to bring that work to pass. As for example: to a man plunged in sensuality, some great misfortune happeneth that mouldeth his heart to a tenderness, and inclineth him to much thoughtfulness. In this temper, he meeteth with a book or preacher that representeth lively to him the danger of his own condition; and giveth him hopes of greater contentment in other objects, after he shall have taken leave of his former beloved sins. This begetteth further conversation with prudent and pious men, and experienced physicians, in curing the soul's maladies, whereby he is at last perfectly converted, and settled in a course of solid virtue and piety.

Now these accidents of his misfortune, the gentle-

ness and softness of his nature, his falling upon a good book, his encountering with a pathetic preacher, the unpremeditated chance that brought him to hear his sermon, his meeting with other worthy men, and the whole concatenation of all the intervening accidents, to work this good effect in him, and that were ranged and disposed from all eternity, by God's particular goodness and providence for his salvation, and without which he had inevitably been damned; this chain of causes, ordered by God to produce this effect, I understand to be grace.

HYDRIOTAPHIA;

OR,

URN-BURIAL:

A DISCOURSE ON THE SEPULCHRAL URNS

LATELY FOUND IN NORFOLK.

INTRODUCTION.

BY THE EDITOR.

This little treatise, based in a great measure on Kirchmann's learned work, "*De Funeribus Romanorum*," was at one time much read by literary men. Charles Lamb and Hazlitt admired it. Leigh Hunt also, if I remember rightly, has, in his light and graceful way, paid the author some well-deserved compliments on its beauty and eloquence; and I may add, that whosoever reads and reflects upon it, will not only unite with them in their admiration, but remember ever after with satisfaction the day when the "Urn-Burial" first came into his hands. It is a grand declamation upon death—impressive, but not exaggerated; solemn, yet not uncheerful. The hope of immortality, the Christian's hope, struggles through and softens the gloom. We whisper to ourselves from time to time, as we read, "There is balm in Gilead." Our spirits rise above the fogs and mists of the earth, and the star of religion sheds its golden beams upon us more brightly as we ascend. There is a philosophical method, and very superior art, in the management of the subject. At first everything smells of the earth, earthly. Tombs and dust and charnel-houses, and all the secrets of the grave, rise up before our imagination. It reminds one of an Egyptian necropolis, with all its sublime stillness and beauty. Pensively we read, not without a deep conviction, that "*mutato nomine, de nobis fabula narratur.*" And oh, there is, as too many know, a loveliness in Death! He keeps the keys of those bright and sunny realms, gladdened by some face we love, which not even the offer of earthly immortality could quench the thirst of visiting, "*in ordine quo natura permiserit.*" The grave is the

portal of heaven. All that is spiritual, all that is lovely, all that the soul clings to in life or in death, meets us as we enter. There the sacred dust we value beyond worlds reposes. Down through that narrow gap sunk the sun of our lives, never again to rise, but in heaven. Oh, who would be immortal with his affections in the grave! That Greek poet understood well what we mean, who introduces Aphrodite exclaiming in grief for the loss of a mortal lover,

ἁ δὲ τάλαινα
Ζώω, καὶ θεὸς ἐμμὶ, καὶ οὐ δύναμαὶ σε διώκειν.

"Wretch that I am,
Fettered by immortality, I cannot
Come where thou art!"

But Sir Thomas Browne soon strikes upon another key. He feels, and paints feelingly, the truth that we pass away like a shadow, and have here no abiding place. He carries his thoughts elsewhere—to that place, where neither moth nor rust corrupts and where thieves do not break through and steal. Arrived at this topic, having fixed the mind full upon immortality, having beheld the corruptible put on incorruptibility, he closes the book, and leaves the reader wiser and better than he found him.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

TO MY WORTHY AND HONOURED FRIEND,

THOMAS LE GROS, OF CROSTWICK, ESQ.

When the funeral pyre was out, and the last valediction over, men took a lasting adieu of their interred friends, little expecting the curiosity of future ages should comment upon their ashes, and having no old experience of the duration of their relics, held no opinion of such after considerations.

But who knows the fate of his bones, or how often he is to be buried? Who hath the oracle of his ashes, or whither they are to be scattered? The relics of many lie, like the ruins of Pompey's[1] in all parts of the earth; and when they arrive at your hands, these may seem to have wandered far, who in a direct and meridian travel have but few miles of known earth between yourself and the pole.[2]

That the bones of Theseus should be seen again in Athens,[3] was not beyond conjecture and hopeful expectation; but that these should arise so opportunely to serve yourself was a hit of fate and honour beyond prediction.

We cannot but wish these urns might have the effect of theatrical vessels and great Hippodrome urns in Rome, to resound the acclamations and honour due unto you.[4] But these are sad and sepulchral pitchers, which have no joyful voices; silently ex-

(1) Pompeios juvenes Asia, atque Europa, sed ipsum terra tegit Lybia.

(2) Little directly but sea between your house and Greenland.

(3) Brought back by Cimon. Plutarch.

(4) The great urns in the Hippodrome at Rome, conceived to resound the voices of people at their shows.

pressing old mortality, the ruins of forgotten times, and can only speak with life, how long in this corruptible frame some parts may be uncorrupted, yet able to outlast bones long unborn, and noblest pile among us. (5)

We present not these as any strange sight or spectacle unknown to your eyes, who have beheld the best of urns and noblest variety of ashes; who are yourself no slender master of antiquities, and can daily command the view of so many imperial faces, which raiseth your thoughts unto old things and consideration of times before you, when even living men were antiquities; when the living might exceed the dead, and to depart this world could not be properly said to go unto the greater number; (6) and so run up your thoughts upon the Ancient of Days, the antiquary's truest object, unto whom the eldest parcels are young, and earth itself an infant; and, without Egyptian account, makes but small noise in thousands. (7)

We were hinted by the occasion, not catched the opportunity, to write of old things, or intrude upon the antiquary. We are coldly drawn unto discourses of antiquities, who have scarce time before us to comprehend new things, or make out learned novelties; but seeing they arose as they lay, almost in silence among us, at least in short account suddenly passed over, we were very unwilling they should die again, and be buried twice among us.

Beside, to preserve the living, and make the dead to live, to keep men out of their urns, and discourse of human fragments in them, is not impertinent unto our profession, whose study is life and death, who daily behold examples of mortality, and of all men least need artificial mementoes, or coffins, by our bedside to mind us of our graves.

It is time to observe occurrences, and let nothing remarkable escape us; the supinity of elder days hath left so much in silence, or time hath so martyred the records, that the most industrious heads do find no easy work to erect a new Britannia. (8)

(5) Worthily possessed by that true gentleman, Sir Horatio Townshend, my honoured friend.

(6) Abiit ad plures.

(7) Which makes the world so many years old.

(8) Wherein M. Dugdale hath excellently well endeavoured, and worthy to be countenanced by ingenuous and noble persons.

It is opportune to look back upon old times, and contemplate our forefathers. Great examples grow thin, and to be fetched from the past world. Simplicity flies away, and iniquity comes at long strides upon us. We have enough to do to make up ourselves from present and past times, and the whole stage of things scarce serveth for our instruction. A complete piece of virtue must be made up from the centos of all ages, as all the beauties of Greece could make but one handsome Venus.

When the bones of King Arthur were digged up,(9) the old race might think they beheld therein some originals of themselves. Unto these of our urns none here can pretend relation, and can only behold the relics of those persons, who in their life giving the laws unto their predecessors, after long obscurity, now lie at their mercies; but remembering the early civility they brought upon these countries, and forgetting long-passed mischiefs, we mercifully preserve their bones and piss not upon their ashes.

In the offer of these antiquities we drive not at ancient families, so long outlasted by them. We are far from erecting your worth upon the pillars of your forefathers, whose merits you illustrate. We honour your old virtues, conformable unto times before you, which are the noblest armoury. And having long experience of your friendly conversation, void of empty formality, full of freedom, constant and generous honesty, I look upon you as a gem of the old rock,(10) and must profess myself even to urn and ashes,

Your ever faithful friend and servant,

THOMAS BROWNE.

Norwich, May 1.

(9) In the time of Henry II. Camden.
(10) Adamas de rupe veteri præstantissimus.

URN-BURIAL.

CHAPTER I.

In the deep discovery of the subterranean world a shallow part would satisfy some inquirers; who, if two or three yards were open about the surface, would not care to rake the bowels of Potosi(1) and regions towards the centre. Nature hath furnished one part of the earth, and man another. The treasures of time lie high, in urns, coins, and monuments, scarce below the roots of some vegetables. Time hath endless rarities, and shows of all varieties; which reveals old things in heaven, makes new discoveries in earth, and even earth itself a discovery. That great antiquity, America, lay buried for a thousand years; and a large part of the earth is still in the urn unto us.

Though if Adam were made out of an extract of the earth, all parts might challenge a restitution, yet few have returned their bones far lower than they might receive them: not affecting the graves of giants, under hilly and heavy coverings, but content with less than their own depth, have wished their bones might lie soft, and the earth be light

(1) The rich mountain of Peru.

upon them; even such as hope to rise again, would not be content with central interment, or so desperately to place their relics as to lie beyond discovery, and in no way to be seen again;(²) which happy contrivance hath made communication with our forefathers, and left unto our view some parts which they never beheld themselves.

Though earth hath engrossed the name, yet water hath proved the smartest grave; which in forty days swallowed almost all mankind, and the living creation; fishes not wholly escaping, except the salt ocean were handsomely contempered by a mixture of the fresh element.

Many have taken voluminous pains to determine the state of the soul upon disunion; but men have been most fantastical in the singular contrivances of their corporeal dissolution; whilst the soberest nations have rested in two ways—of simple inhumation and burning.

That carnal interment, or burying, was of the elder date, the old examples of Abraham and the patriarchs are sufficient to illustrate; and were without competition, if it could be made out that Adam was buried near Damascus, or mount Cal-

(²) A Mr. James Douglas, to whom the copy we print from belonged, has written on the margin a few notes, which we insert as he wrote them, appending his name to each. On the above passage he exclaims: "A charming inference to illustrate the small depth of ancient burial." But Sir Thomas's notion is merely a poetical extravagance. The true reason, of course, why men do never bury themselves in the centre of the earth, is, that it would cost too much trouble to reach it. —Ed.

vary, according to some tradition. God himself, that buried but one, was pleased to make choice of this way, collectible from Scripture expression, and the hot contest between Satan and the archangel, about discovering the body of Moses. But the practice of burning was also of a great antiquity and of no slender extent. For (not to derive the same from Hercules)(3) noble descriptions there are hereof in the Grecian funerals of Homer, in the formal obsequies of Patroclus, and Achilles; and somewhat elder in the Theban war, and solemn combustion of Menœceus, and Archemorus, contemporary unto Jair, the eighth judge of Israel. Confirmable also among the Trojans, from the funeral pyre of Hector, burnt before the gates of Troy, and the burning of Penthesilea, (4) the Amazonean queen; and long continuance of that practice, in the inward countries of Asia: while as low as the

(3) Why not? The story is extant in choice Greek, written originally by the historian Andron, and preserved by the Scholiast on the first Iliad. Upon the treachery of Laomedon, celebrated by poets, and known to every school-boy, Hercules determined on assembling an army, for the purpose of chastising his majesty's jesuitical conduct, and bringing him to reason. The hero, having no authority to employ compulsion, was fain to make use of persuasion, and obtained from King Lycimnius permission to take along with him his son Argeios, upon condition he would swear to bring him back. Hercules of course took the oath, as any soldier would, and Argeios accompanying him was slain. He was now somewhat puzzled, but, being fertile in expedients, and bold besides, he burned the body, and taking back the ashes along with him, presented them to Lycimnius, as a proof of his faith. This, according to Hellenic tradition, was the origin of burning the dead.—Ed.

(4) Q. Calaber. lib. i.

reign of Julian, we find that the king of Chaonia[e] burnt the body of his son, and interred the ashes in a silver urn.

The same practice extended also far west,[f] and besides Heruleans, Getes, and Thracians, was in use with most of the Celtæ, Sarmatians, Germans, Gauls, Danes, Swedes, Norwegians; not to omit some use thereof among Carthaginians and Americans: of greater antiquity among the Romans than most opinion, or Pliny seems to allow. For [beside the old table laws of burning[g] or burying within the city, of making the funeral fire with plain wood, or quenching the fire with wine] Manlius, the consul, burnt the body of his son. Numa, by special clause of his will, was not burnt, but buried; and Remus was solemnly buried, according to the description of Ovid.[h]

Cornelius Sylla was not the first whose body was burned in Rome, but of the Cornelian family, which being indifferently, not frequently used before, from that time spread, and became the prevalent practice. Not totally pursued in the highest run of cremation; for when even crows were funerally burnt, Poppæa, the wife of Nero, found a

---

(e) Ammianus Marcellinus 18. Gumbrates, king of Chaonia, a country near Persia.

(f) Arnoldus Montanus not. in Cæs. Commentar. L. G. Gyraldus. Kirkmannus.

(g) 12 Tabul. part. 1. de jure sacro. Hominem mortuum in urbe ne sepelito, neve urito. Tit. 15. Rogum ascia ne polito. Tit. 16. Item Vigener. Annotat. in Livium et Alex. cum Tiraquello. Roscinus cum Dempstero.

(h) Ultima prolata subdita flamma rogo. Ovid Fast. lib. iv. 856. cum Car. Neapol. anaptyxi.

peculiar grave interment. Now as all customs were founded upon some bottom of reason, so there wanted not grounds for this; according to several apprehensions of the most rational dissolution. Some being of the opinion of Thales, that water was the original of all things, thought it most equal to submit unto the principle of putrefaction, and conclude in a moist relentment. Others conceived it most natural to end in fire, as due unto the master principle in the composition, according to the doctrine of Heraclitus; and therefore heaped up large piles, more actively to waft them toward that element, whereby they also declined a visible degeneration into worms, and left a lasting parcel of their composition.(9)

Some apprehended a purifying virtue in fire, refining the grosser commixture, and firing out the æthereal particles so deeply immersed in it. And such as by tradition or rational conjecture held any hint of the final pyre of all things, or that this ele-

(9) Whether Browne here assigns the proper reason or not, certain it is that the practice of burning prevailed from very remote antiquity in Greece. The Athenians, indeed, made use of both modes of sepulture. But the Scholiast on Thucydides, II. 34. τῷ πατρῳῳ νόμῳ χρώμενοι,—states very positively, that *by law* the bodies of the dead were to be burned. t. v. p. 331. *Bipont.* Dr. Arnold, in his very excellent edition, inserts a note of Hudson, referring to Petit. Legg. Att. p 500. f. But in fact the whole titulus VIII. of lib. vi. p. 494. ff. relates to funerals and the laws that regulated them. Kirchmann. De Funeribus Romanorum, I. 1. and in other parts of his very learned and interesting work, has touched on the funeral ceremonies of the Greeks; and from him Browne evidently borrowed most of his facts and authorities.—Ed.

ment at last must be too hard for all the rest, might conceive most naturally of the fiery dissolution. Others pretending no natural grounds, politically declined the malice of enemies upon their buried bodies. Which consideration led Sylla unto this practice; who having thus served the body of Marius, could not but fear a retaliation upon his own; entertained after in the civil wars, and revengeful contentions of Rome.

But as many nations embraced, and many left it indifferent, so others too much affected or strictly declined this practice. The Indian Brahmins seemed too great friends unto fire, who burnt themselves alive, and thought it the noblest way to end their days in fire, according to the expression of the Indian burning himself at Athens,([10]) in his last words upon the pyre, unto the amazed spectators, "Thus I make myself immortal."

But the Chaldeans, the great idolators of fire, abhored the burning of their carcases as a pollution of that deity. The Persian Magi ([11]) declined it

([10]) And therefore the inscription of his tomb was made accordingly. Nic. Damasc.

([11]) There is reason from this, and other passages, to believe the Druids did not burn their dead.—Douglas. That is, supposing the religion of the Druids to have been an offshoot from the Magi. But we have no proof that this was the case. Indeed, several circumstances recorded of the manners of the Gauls, sprung from the same stock with the Britons, would seem to prove that burning *was* practised by the Druids. For the Gauls not only burned their dead—in which they were wise—but on many occasions burned along with them the living also. Their funerals were conducted with great pomp. Whatever in life had been dear to the departed, whether slaves, or mistresses, or wives, they united to the dead on the funeral pile; conceiving that the

upon the like scruple, and being only solicitous about their bones, exposed their flesh to the prey of birds and dogs. And the Parsees, now in India, which expose their bodies unto vultures, and endure not so much as *feretra*, or biers of wood, the proper fuel of fire, are led on with such niceties; but whether the ancient Germans, who burned their dead, held any such fear to pollute their deity of Herthus, or the earth, we have no authentic conjecture.

The Egyptians were afraid of fire, not as a deity but a devouring element, mercilessly consuming their bodies and leaving too little of them; and therefore, by precious embalments, depositure in dry earths, or handsome inclosure in glasses, contrived the notablest ways of integral conservation. ([12]) And from such Egyptian scruples, imbibed by Pythagoras, it may be conjectured that Numa and the Pythagorical sect first waved the fiery solution.

The Scythians, who swore by wind and sword,

terrible sacrifice would prove grateful to his manes. Cæs. de Bell. Gall. VI.—Ed.

([12]) Though Egyptian mummies, preserved in cases, and exhibited about as shows, have rendered this practice familiar to the public, still nothing can be more strange or impressive than the depositories of those preserved bodies in the Libyan or Arabian mountains. I have lodged for a time in one of these tombs, with the remains of an Egyptian lady by my bedside. The dust of the dead settled on everything around. But there was no horror in their skeletons. They decayed in balms and spices, wrapped in fine linen, in gilded coffins, inhabiting, as it were, magnificent palaces, spacious, richly adorned, and lasting as the world. There was always a sense of the sublime impressed deeply upon the mind, which perhaps constituted the principal pleasure of my sojourn in that extraordinary country.—Ed.

that is, by life and death, were so far from burning their bodies, that they declined all interment, and made their graves in the air. ([13]) And the Ichthyophagi, or fish-eating nations about Egypt, affected the sea for their grave; thereby declining visible corruption, and restoring the debt of their bodies. Whereas the old heroes in Homer, dreaded nothing more than water or drowning, probably upon the old opinion of the fiery substance of the soul only extinguishable by that element; and therefore the poet emphatically implieth the total destruction in this kind of death, which happened to Ajax Oileus. ([14])

The old Balearians had a peculiar mode, for they used great urns and much wood, but no fire in

([13]) Not the Scythians generally, but a particular tribe. The more common custom among those barbarians was, for persons to commit suicide on the death of those they loved, that they might share their graves. D. Hieron. ad Jovin. l. ii. Theod. Serm. de Legg. Upon their conversion to Christianity this practice, savage but affectionate, was of necessity laid aside. Among the Heruli, a Scythian tribe, women hung themselves at the tombs of their husbands, not always, however, from love, but because it was the fashion, and people would have cut them had they dared to live. Procop. de Bell. Gothic. l. ii. In other parts of Scythia a practice prevailed exactly similar to that described in the story of the Pearl Merchant, in the "Tales of the Ramad'han." That is, people showed their affection to the dead by eating them. Lucian in Toxar. It was the Colchians, who, as Browne expresses it, "made their graves in the air." "The Colchi," says Nicolaus, "do not bury their dead, but suspend them on trees." Stob. Serm. 120. That curious sophist, Ælian, is somewhat more explicit, for he informs us, that they were first sewn up in skins, otherwise the birds of prey would have quickly cleared the branches of them. Var. Hist. IV. 1.—Ed.—

([14]) Which Magius reads ἐξαπόλωλε.

their burials, while they bruised the flesh and bones of the dead, crowded them into urns, and laid heaps of wood upon them. ([15]) And the Chinese ([16]) without cremation or urnal interment of their bodies, make use of trees and much burning, while they plant a pine-tree by their grave, and burn great numbers of painted draughts of slaves and horses over it, civilly content with their company in effigy, which barbarous nations exact unto reality. ([17])

Christians abhorred this way of obsequies, and though they sticked not to give their bodies to be burned in their lives, detested that mode after death; affecting rather a depositure than absumption, and properly submitting unto the sentence of God, to return not unto ashes but unto dust again, conformably unto the practice of the patriarchs, the interment of our Saviour, of Peter, Paul, and the ancient martyrs. ([18]) And so far at last declining promiscuous interment with pagans, that some have suffered ecclesiastical censures for making no scruple thereof. ([19])

([15]) Diodorus Siculus.

([16]) Ramusius in Navigat.

([17]) The practice of the Chinese arose from the Scythian custom of sacrificing slaves, &c. to their deceased kings. DOUGLAS. The observation is just. For the extent to which human sacrifices have prevailed among mankind, see Jacob. Geusii Victim. Human. 12mo. Amstd. 1691.—ED.

([18]) This sentence explains the change from urn-burial, &c. to inhumation.—DOUGLAS.

([19]) Martialis, the bishop. Cyprian.

The Musulman believers will never admit this fiery resolution, for they hold a present trial from their black and white angels in the grave, which they must have made so hollow that they may rise upon their knees. ([20])

The Jewish nation, though they entertained the old way of inhumation, yet sometimes admitted this practice; for the men of Jabesh burnt the body of Saul; and by no prohibited practice, to avoid contagion or pollution, in time of pestilence, burnt the bodies of their friends. ([21]) And when they burnt not their dead bodies, yet sometimes used great burnings near and about them, deducible from the expressions concerning Jehoram, Zedechias, and the sumptuous pyre of Asa; and were so little averse from pagan burning, that the Jews, lamenting the death of Cæsar, their friend and revenger on Pompey, frequented the place where his body was burnt, for many nights together.([22]) And as they raised noble monuments and mausoleums for their own nation, ([23]) so they were not scrupulous in erecting some for others, accord-

([20]) I observed, too, in the cemeteries about Cairo, that in every Musulman tomb is a diminutive arched door-way, by which dogs, jackals, and other animals enter in and shelter themselves at night. On inquiry, I was told it is left to afford the ghost a free passage in and out. "Egypt and Mohammed Ali," vol. II.—Ed.

([21]) Amos, vi. 10.

([22]) Sueton. in vita, Jul. Cæs.

([23]) As that magnificent sepulchral monument erected by Simon. Mach. i. 13.

ing to the practice of Daniel, who left that lasting sepulchral pile in Ecbatana, for the Medean and Persian kings. ([24])

But even in times of subjection and hottest use, they conformed not unto the Roman practice of burning; whereby the prophecy was secured concerning the body of Christ, that it should not see corruption, or a bone should not be broken; which we believe was also providentially prevented, from the soldier's spear and nails, that passed by the little bones both in his hands and feet; not of ordinary contrivance, that it should not corrupt on the cross, according to the laws of Roman crucifixion, or a hair of his head perish, though observable in Jewish customs to cut the hair of malefactors.

Nor in their long cohabitation with Egyptians, crept into a custom of their exact embalming, wherein deeply slashing the muscles, ([25]) and taking out the brains and entrails, they had broken the subject of so entire a resurrection, nor fully answered the types of Enoch, Elijah, or Jonah, which yet to prevent or restore was of equal facility unto that rising power, able to break the fascinations and bands of death, to get clear out of the cere-cloth, and a hundred pounds of ointment, and out of the sepulchre before the stone was rolled from it.

([24]) Κατασκέυασμα ϑαυμασίως πεποιημένον, whereof a Jewish priest had always the custody unto Josephus's days. Jos. Antiq. lib. x.

([25]) See Herod. l. ii.—Ed.

But though they embraced not this practice of burning, yet entertained they many ceremonies agreeable unto Greek and Roman obsequies. And he that observeth their funeral feasts, their lamentations at the grave, their music, and weeping mourners; how they closed the eyes of their friends, how they washed, anointed, and kissed the dead, may easily conclude these were not mere pagan civilities. But whether that mournful burden, and treble calling out after Absalom had any reference unto the last conclamation and triple valediction, used by other nations, we hold but a wavering conjecture.

Civilians make sepulture but of the law of nations; others do naturally found it and discover it also in animals. They that are so thick-skinned as still to credit the story of the phœnix, may say something for animal burning. More serious conjectures find some examples of sepulture in elephants, cranes, the sepulchral cells of pismires, and practice of bees; which civil society carrieth out their dead, and hath exequies, if not interments. ([26])

([26]) Sir Thomes Browne is here, contrary to his practice, somewhat too brief. The reader might, perhaps, like to learn, if not already conversant with funereal literature, to what authors we are indebted for those "serious conjectures." They are all ancient; and first Ælian informs us, (Hist. Animal. V. 49.) that even in animals nature has implanted a dread of mortality, for that they, like men, when the race of any of their companions is run, hasten to remove their dead out of their sight. This practice has been observed, particularly among the bees, who carry forth their dead with a kind of funeral procession. Plin. Hist. Nat. XI. 18.

CHAPTER II.

The solemnities, ceremonies, rites of their cremation or interment, so solemnly delivered by authors, we shall not disparage our reader to repeat. Only the last and lasting part in their urns, collected bones and ashes, we cannot wholly omit or decline that subject, which occasion lately presented in some discovered among us.

In a field of old Walsingham, not many months past, were digged up between forty and fifty urns, deposited in a dry and sandy soil, not a yard deep, nor far from one another. Not all strictly of one figure, but most answering these described; some containing two pounds of bones, distinguishable in

---

"Tum corpora luce carentum
Exportant tectis, et tristia funera ducunt."
Virg. Georg. IV. 255. 6.

The swallows, too, if any among them die, perform the same ceremonies. Ælian. Hist. Anim. V. 49. The ants make a nearer approach to the customs of mankind; for, not satisfied with casting forth their dead, like the bees and swallows, they actually, according to Ælian and Pliny, bury them in the earth. Ælian. Hist. Anim. VI. 42. Plin. Hist. Nat. XI. 30. Pliny observes, in relating the circumstance, that they are the only creatures that imitate man in his reverence for the dead. But in this, if we may believe Ælian, he is altogether mistaken, for the cranes also inter their dead. Hist. Anim. II. 1. As do also the elephant and the dolphin. ibid. and XII. 6. Nay, animals have sometimes performed the obsequies of men, particularly the hawk and the dolphin, whose affection for the human race was much celebrated by the ancient fabulists. Ælian. Var. Hist. II. 42. Plin. IX. 8. Plut. de Sol. Anim.—Ed.

skulls, ribs, jaws, thigh-bones, and teeth, with fresh impressions of their combustion. Besides the extraneous substances, like pieces of small boxes, or combs handsomely wrought, handles of small brass instruments, brazen nippers, and in one some kind of opale. ([27])

Near the same plot of ground, for about six yards compass were digged up coals and incinerated substances, which begat conjecture that this was the ustrina ([28]) or place of burning their bodies, or some sacrificing place unto the manes, which was properly below the surface of the ground, as the aræ and altars unto the gods and heroes above it.

That these were the urns of Romans, ([29]) from the common costume and place where they were found, is no obscure conjecture, not far from a Roman gar-

([27]) In one sent me by my worthy friend Dr. Thomas Witherly, of Walsingham.

This opale stone appears to have been a crystal globe, which is frequently discovered in barrows and urns. Vide *Nænia*. Or perhaps glass beads.—DOUGLAS.

([28]) The *ustrina*, or place where the dead were burned, was often situated in cemeteries, in the immediate vicinity of the tombs, as appears from several inscriptions: "*Huic monumento ustrinum applicari non licet.*" And again, "*ad hoc monumentum ustrinum applicari non licet.*" Frequently, however, a different practice prevailed; the body was burned in one place, and interred in another, as in the case of Julius Cæsar. Dion. l. xliv. The meaning of ustrinum, or ustrina, for both forms were in use, is thus explained by an ancient Glossary: ustrina, πυρκαϊκά: ustrina, καῦστρα νεκρῶν.—ED.

([29]) Unless this spot was near the station, that is, a few hundred yards from it, it is impossible that it could be the Roman station. Its distance from Brancaster proves it not to be a Roman burial-place, but, in my opinion, a British one, contemporary with the Romans.—DOUGLAS.

rison, and but five miles from Brancaster, set down by ancient record under the name of Brannodunum. And where the adjoining town, containing seven parishes, in no very different sound, but Saxon termination, still retains the name of Burnham, which being an early station, it is not improbable the neighbour parts were filled with habitations, either of Romans themselves, or Britons Romanised, which observed the Roman customs.

Nor is it improbable that the Romans early possessed this country; for though we meet not with such strict particulars of these parts, before the new institution of Constantine, and military charge of the count of the Saxon shore, and that about the Saxon invasions, the Dalmatian horsemen were in the garrison of Brancaster; yet in the time of Claudius, Vespasian, and Severus, we find no less than three legions dispersed through the province of Britain. And as high as the reign of Claudius a great overthrow was given unto the Iceni, by the Roman lieutenant Ostorius. Not long after the country was so molested, that in hope of a better state, Prastagus bequeathed his kingdom unto Nero and his daughters; and Boadicea, his queen, fought the last decisive battle with Paulinus. After which time and conquest of Agricola the lieutenant of Vespasian, probable it is they wholly possessed this country, ordering it into garrisons or habitations, best suitable with their securities. And so some Roman habitations not improbable in these parts, as high as the time of Vespasian, where the

Saxons after seated,([30]) in whose thin-filled maps we yet find the name of Walsingham. Now if the Iceni were but Gammadims, Anconians, or men that lived in an angle, wedge, or elbow of Britain, according to the original etymology, this country will challenge the emphatical appellation, as most properly making the elbow or iken of Icenia.

That Britain was notably populous is undeniable, from that expression of Cæsar;([31]) that the Romans themselves were early in no small numbers, seventy thousand with their associates, slain by Boadicea, affords a sure account. And though not many Roman habitations are now known, yet some by old works, rampiers, coins, and urns do testify their possessions. Some urns have been found at Castor, some also about Southcreek, and not many years past, no less than ten in a field at Buxton,([32]) not near any recorded garrison. Nor is it strange to find Roman coins, of copper and silver, among us; of Vespasian, Trajan, Adrian, Commodus, Antoninus, Severus, &c. But the greater number of Dioclesian, Constantine, Constans, Valens, with many of Victorinus Posthumius, Tetricus, and the thirty tyrants in the reign of Gallienus; and some as high as Adrianus have

([30]) Saxon burial-place before Christianity. The same near Salisbury Plain. This mode (of burying in urns) prevailed among all the northern nations.—DOUGLAS.

([31]) Hominum est infinita multitudo, creberrimaque ædificia ferè Gallicis consimilia. Cæs. de Bello Gal. l. v. § 12.

([32]) In the ground of my worthy friend Robert Jegon, Esq. wherein some things contained were preserved by the most worthy Sir William Paston, Bart.

been found about Thetford, or Sitomagus, mentioned in the itinerary of Antoninus, as the way from Venta or Castor unto London.([33]) But the most frequent discovery is made at the two Casters by Norwich and Yarmouth,([34]) at Burghcastle and Brancaster.([35])

Besides, the Norman, Saxon and Danish pieces of Cuthred, Canutus, William, Matilda,([36]) and others, some British coins of gold have been dispersedly found; and no small number of silver pieces near Norwich;([37]) with a rude head upon the obverse, and an ill-formed horse on the reverse, with inscriptions *Ic. Duro. T.* whether implying *Iceni, Durotriges, Tascia,* or *Trinobantes,* we leave to higher conjecture. Vulgar chronology will have Norwich castle as old as Julius Cæsar; but his distance from these parts, and its Gothic form of structure, abridgeth such antiquity. The British coins afford conjecture of early habitation in these parts, though the city of Norwich arose from the

([33]) From Castor to Thetford the Romans accounted thirty-two miles, and from thence observed not our common road to London, but passed by Combretonium ad Ansum, Canonium, Cæsaromagus, &c. by Bretenham, Coggeshall, Chelmsford, Brentwood, &c.

([34]) Most at Caster by Yarmouth, found in a place called East-bloody-burgh Furlong, belonging to Mr. Thomas Wood, a person of civility, industry and knowledge in this way, who hath made observation of remarkable things about him, and from whom we have received divers silver and copper coins.

([35]) Belonging to that noble gentleman, and true example of worth, Sir Ralph Hare, Bart., my honoured friend.

([36]) A piece of Maud, the Empress, said to be found in Buckenham Castle, with this inscription, *Elle n'a elle.*

([37]) At Thorpe.

ruins of Venta, and though perhaps not without some habitation before, was enlarged, builded, and nominated by the Saxons. In what bulk or populosity it stood in the old East-angle monarchy, tradition and history are silent. Considerable it was in the Danish eruptions, when Sueno burnt Thetford and Norwich,([38]) and Ulfketel, the governor thereof, was able to make some resistance, and after endeavoured to burn the Danish navy.

How the Romans left so many coins in countries of their conquests seems of hard resolution, except we consider how they buried them underground, when upon barbarous invasions they were fain to desert their habitations in most part of their empire, and the strictness of their laws forbidding to transfer them to any other uses; wherein the Spartans([39]) were singular, who, to make their copper money useless, contempered it with vinegar.([40]) That the Britons left any some wonder; since their money was iron, and iron rings before Cæsar;([41])

([38]) Brampton Abbas Jornallensis.

([39]) Plut. in vita Lycurg.

([40]) The Romans may have adopted that *use*, and this may account for so many coins, which are found entirely destroyed by verdigrease.—DOUGLAS.

([41]) Remark, that Cæsar only made a fugitive conquest, and to judge by the old British coins found in this island, we may suppose they were stricken before Cæsar's conquest.—DOUGLAS. In truth Cæsar never conquered the island at all. He merely made the discovery that, by bringing the forces of Rome to bear upon it, it might be subdued. For himself, so far from defeating the Britons, he was clearly driven out of the country, though he had not the candour to acknowledge it. Tacitus, in fact, observes, that he merely pointed out the island to his successors:

and those of after stamp by permission, and but small in bulk and bigness; that so few of the Saxons remain, because overcome by succeeding conquerors upon the place, their coins by degrees passed into other stamps, and the marks of after ages

Than the time of these urns being deposited, or the precise antiquity of these relics, nothing of more uncertainty. For, since the lieutenant of Claudius seems to have made the first progress into these parts, since Boadicea was overthrown by the forces of Nero, and Agricola put a full end to these conquests, it is not probable the country was fully garrisoned or planted before; and, therefore, however these urns might be of later date, not likely of higher antiquity.

And the succeeding emperors desisted not from their conquests in these and other parts; as testified by history and medal inscription yet extant. The province of Britain in so divided a distance from Rome, beholding the faces of many imperial persons, and in large account no fewer than Cæsar, Claudius, Britannicus, Vespasian, Titus, Adrian, Severus, Commodus, Geta, and Caracalla.

A great obscurity herein, because no medal or emperor's coin enclosed, which might denote the date of their interments,([42]) observable in many

---

"*potest videri ostendisse posteris, non tradidisse.*" Vit. Agric. §. 13.—Ed.

([42]) A clear demonstration that these urns were not Roman; and which perfectly agrees with my former remark that, had they been Roman, their lachrymatories, ustrinal vessels, incense pots, &c. would have been found with them.—Douglas.

urns, and found in those of Spitalfields ([43]) by London, which contained the coins of Claudius, Vespasian, Commodus, Antoninus, attended with lachrymatories, lamps, ([44]) bottles of liquor, and other appurtenances of affectionate superstition, which in these rural interments were wanting.

Some uncertainty there is from the period or term of burning, or the cessation of that practice. Macrobius affirmeth it was disused in his days. ([45])

([43]) Stowe's Survey of London.

([44]) The uses of lamps in tombs may not, at first sight, be obvious. But the sepulchral monuments of antiquity having been erected as so many dwelling-places for the manes, which in their dreary solitude might sometimes stand in need of light, it was customary in many countries to keep a lamp constantly burning in tombs. Thus in the will of Mævia, preserved by Modestinus, l. xliv., we find three slaves restored to freedom on condition that they would kindle and keep burning the sepulchral lamp, each fulfilling the office during one whole month in turns. "Let my servant Saccus, and the girls Eutychia and Hirine, be free upon these conditions, that they light the lamp in my monument on alternate months, and perform the usual solemnities for the dead." *D. Hierom.* The Christians adopted this practice of the pagans, and were accustomed to kindle lamps at the tombs of the saints and martyrs; which the learned among them sometimes derided. Thus Vigilantius writes: "Prope ritum gentilium videmus sub prætextu religionis introductum in ecclesiis, sole adhuc fulgente, moles cereorum accendi, et ubicunque pulvisculum nescio quod in modico vasculo pretioso est circumdatum, osculantes adorant," &c. From which we see how early the Roman Catholic practices prevailed in the church, and gave rise to abuses.—ED.

([45]) That is, in the reign of the younger Theodosius, in the beginning of the fifth century. Gibbon. V. 411. ff. Kirchman. l. i. p. 13, quotes the passage of Macrobius, vii. 7, and in this part of the work has supplied Browne with almost every one of his authorities. Respecting the date of the cessation of burning

But most agree, though without authentic record, that it ceased with the Antonini. Most safely to be understood after the reign of those emperors, which assumed the name of Antoninus, extending unto Heliogabalus. Not strictly after Marcus; for about fifty years later we find the magnificent burning, and consecration of Severus; and if we so fix this period or cessation, these urns will challenge above thirteen hundred years.

But whether this practice was only then left by emperors and great persons, or generally about Rome, and not in other provinces, we hold no authentic account. For after Tertullian, in the days of Minucius, it was obviously objected upon Christians, that they condemned the practice of burning.([46]) And we find a passage in Sidonius,([47]) which asserteth that practice in France unto a lower account. And perhaps not fully disused till Christianity fully established, which gave the final extinction to these sepulchral bonfires.

Whether they were the bones of men, or women, or children, no authentic decision from ancient custom in distinct places of burial. Although not improbably conjectured, that the double sepulchre, or burying-place of Abraham, had in it such intention. But from exility of bones, thinness of

---

the dead, he says, "Nam ab Antoninis illam esse abrogatum ut quidam volunt, neque fictum, neque scriptum, neque pictum, usquam memini legere." *ubi sup.*—ED.

([46]) Execrantur rogos, et damnant ignium sepulturam. *Min. in Oct.*

([47]) Sidon Apollinaris.

skulls, smallness of teeth, ribs, and thigh-bones; not improbable that many thereof were persons of minor age, or women.([48]) Confirmable also from things contained in them. In most were found substances resembling combs,([49]) plates like boxes, fastened with iron pins, and handsomely overwrought like the necks or bridges of musical instruments, long brass plates overwrought like the handles of neat implements, brazen nippers to pull away hair, and in one a kind of opale([50]) yet maintaining a bluish colour.

Now that they accustomed to burn or bury with them things wherein they excelled, delighted, or which were dear unto them, either as farewells unto all pleasure, or vain apprehension that they might use them in the other world, is testified by all antiquity. Observable from the gem, or beryl ring, upon the finger of Cynthia, the mistress of Propertius, when, after her funeral pyre, her ghost appeared unto him.([51]) And nobly illustrated

([48]) This passage proves this *busta* to have belonged to a peaceable people, and that it was the burial-place of a British unconverted tribe or clan, about the fifth century.—DOUGLAS.

([49]) Similar to the implements discovered by me and Mr. Faucet, in tumuli, near Canterbury.—DOUGLAS.

([50]) This opale was a blue bead.—DOUGLAS.

([51]) But this was not the uniform custom of antiquity. From some superstition, not altogether intelligible to us, they were careful, sometimes even before death had closed the eyes of their friends, to take off the rings and other ornaments from their fingers. "Gravatis somno aut morientibus, *religione quodam* annuli detrahuntur." *Plin. Hist. Nat.* XXXIII. 1. An example is furnished by the death-bed scene of Tiberius. Falling

from the contents of that Roman urn preserved by Cardinal Farnese,(52) wherein, besides great number of gems with heads of gods and goddesses, were found an ape of agate, a grasshopper, an elephant of amber, a crystal ball, three glasses, two spoons, and six nuts of crystal. And, beyond the contents of urns, in the monument of Childerick the First,(53) and fourth king from Pharamond, casually discovered three years past at Tournay,(54) restoring unto the world much gold richly adorning

---

into a lethargy, his attendants, who mistook it for death, drew the ring from his finger; but the tyrant recovering, and preserving to the last his suspicious character and presence of mind, immediately demanded it back. Sucton. in Vit. § 73. By the collapsing of the muscles, and consequent shrinking of the fingers, the rings of dying persons sometimes dropped at the last moment from the hand, which was regarded as a sign that death had taken place. Thus Ælius Spartianus, describing the last moments of Hadrian, says, "Signa mortis hæc habuit: annulus, in quo imago ipsius sculpta erat, sponte de digito delapsus est." c. xxiv. It has been suspected that an apprehension lest these relics should be stolen by the persons employed to wash and lay out the body, may have been *one* cause why rings, &c. were thus abstracted; for they were often replaced on the day of cremation, and consumed on the funeral pile, as in the case of Propertius's Cynthia, alluded to in the text. See the Elegies of this learned and elegant poet, l. iv. Eleg. vii. p. 292, edit. *Barb.* She appears to him in a dream, and he says,—

> "Eosdem habuit secum, quibus est elata, capillos,
> Eosdem oculos: lateri vestis adusta fuit.
> Et *solitum* digito beryllon adederat ignis."

ED.

(52) Vigeneri Annot. in 4 Liv.

(53) Chifflet in Anast. Childer.

(54) On which Douglas remarks: "This was not the grave of King Childerick; the ring bearing his name betrays evident signs of forgery; the letters not being of Gothic form, but modern Roman."—ED.

his sword, two hundred rubies, many hundred imperial coins, three hundred golden bees, the bones and horse-shoe of his horse interred with him, according to the barbarous magnificence of those days in their sepulchral obsequies. Although, if we steer by the conjecture of many a Septuagint expression, some trace thereof may be found even with the ancient Hebrews, not only from the sepulchral treasure of David, but the circumcision-knives which Joshua also buried.

Some men, considering the contents of these urns, lasting pieces and toys included in them, and the custom of burning with many other nations, might somewhat doubt whether all urns found among us were properly Roman relics, or some not belonging unto our British, Saxon, or Danish forefathers.

In the form of burial among the ancient Britons, the large discourses of Cæsar, Tacitus, and Strabo are silent: for the discovery whereof, with other particulars, we much deplore the loss of that letter which Cicero expected or received from his brother Quintus, as a resolution of British customs; or the account which might have been made by Scribonius Largus, the physician accompanying the emperor Claudius, who might have also discovered that frugal bit of the old Britons,(55) which in the bigness of a bean could satisfy their thirst and hunger.

But, that the Druids and ruling priests used to

(55) Dionis. excerpta per Xiphilin. in Severo.

burn and bury is expressed by Pomponius;([56]) that Bellinus, the brother of Brennus, and king of Britain, was burnt is acknowledged by Polydorus, as also by Amandus Zierexensis in *Historia*, and Pineda in his *Universa Historia*, Spanish. That they held that practice in Gallia, Cæsar expressly delivereth. Whether the Britons (probably descended from them, of like religion, language, and manners) did not sometimes make use of burning; or whether, at least, such as were after civilized unto the Roman life and manners conformed not unto this practice, we have no historical assertion or denial.([57]) But since, from the account of Tacitus, the Romans early wrought so much civility upon the British stock, that they brought them to build temples, to wear the gown, and study the Roman laws and language, that they conformed also unto their religious rites and customs in burial seems no improbable conjecture.

That burning the dead was used in Sarmatia is affirmed by Gaguinus; that the Sueons and Goth-

([56]) The passage of Pomponius Mela, to which Browne here refers, is highly curious. He remarks that one of the doctrines of the Druids, which they inculcated in order that their disciples might conduct themselves more gallantly in war, was, that human souls are eternal, and enjoy life in a future state. On this account they burned and interred with the bodies of the dead such things as they had stood in need of while living. De Situ Orbis. III. 2. 21. ff. p. 312. *Voss.*—Ed.

([57]) Sir Thomas immediately forgets, therefore, the passage of Pomponius Mela, the sense of which I have given above, in which he distinctly states that they burned the dead. "Itaque *cum mortuis cremant* ac defodiunt, apta viventibus olim."—Ed.

landers used to burn their princes and great persons is delivered by Saxo and Olaus; that this was the old German practice is also asserted by Tacitus.([58]) And, though we are bare in historical particulars of such obsequies in this island, or that the Saxons, Jutes, and Angles burnt their dead, yet came they from parts where it was of ancient practice; the Germans using it, from whom they were descended. And even in Jutland and Sleswick, in Anglia Cymbrica, urns with bones were found not many years before us.([59])

But the Danish and northern nations have raised an era, or point of compute, from their custom of burning their dead: some deriving it from Unguinus, some from Frotho the Great, who ordained by law that princes and chief commanders should be committed unto the fire, though the common sort had the common grave interment.([60]) So Starkatterus, that old hero, was burnt, and Ringo royally burnt the body of Harold the king, slain by him.

What time this custom generally expired in that nation we discern no assured period; whether it

---

([58]) Germaniâ, c. 27; Cæsar, De Bello Gallico, l. vi. c. 19. Kirchmann, De Fun. Roman. p. 11.—Ed.

([59]) Roisold, Brendetiide. Ild tyde.

([60]) A probable distinction among some nations. But as we find in history so great a dissimilarity of custom in the burials of the ancients, it is absurd in an antiquary to attempt to fix on any decisive criterion for determining on the outward appearance of tumuli; and, indeed, sometimes, from the internal contents, when coins and other relics do not produce data for him to judge from.—Douglas.

ceased before Christianity, or upon their conversion by Ausgurius the Gaul, in the time of Ludovicus Pius, the son of Charles the Great, according to good computes; or whether it might not be used by some persons, while for a hundred and eighty years Paganism and Christianity were promiscuously embraced among them, there is no assured conclusion; about which time the Danes were busy in England, and particularly infested this country, where many castles and strong-holds were built by them, or against them, and great number of names and families still derived from them. But since this custom was probably disused before their invasion or conquest, and the Romans confessedly practised the same, since their possession of this island, the most assured account will fall upon the Romans, or Britons Romanized.

However, certain it is, that urns, conceived of no Roman original, are often digged up both in Norway and Denmark, handsomely described, and graphically represented by the learned physician Wormius;([61]) and in some parts of Denmark in no ordinary number, as stands delivered by authors exactly describing those countries.([62]) And they contained not only bones, but many other substances in them, as knives, pieces of iron, brass, and wood, and one of Norway a brass, gilded Jew's-harp.

Nor were they confused or careless in disposing

([61]) Olai Wormii Monumenta et Antiquitat. Dan.

([62]) Adolphus Cyprius in Annal. Sleswic. Urnis adeo abundabat collis, &c.

the noblest sort, while they placed large stones in circle about the urns or bodies which they interred; somewhat answerable unto the monument of Rollrich stones in England,(63) or sepulchral monument probably erected by Rollo, who after conquered Normandy, where, it is not improbable, somewhat might be discovered. Meanwhile, to what nation or person belonged that large urn found at Ashburie, (64) containing mighty bones, and a buckler; what those large urns found at Little Massingham,(65) or why the Anglesey urns are placed with their mouths downward, remains yet undiscovered.

CHAPTER III.

Plastered and whited sepulchres (66) were anciently affected in cadaverous and corruptive burials; and the rigid Jews were wont to garnish the sepulchres

(63) In Oxfordshire. Camden.

(64) In Cheshire. Twinus de Rebus Albionicis.

(65) In Norfolk. Hollinshed.

(66) Such a sepulchre I opened on Chatham Lines, and presented the Society an account of it.—Douglas. No doubt attempts have been made in all countries to soften the terrors of the grave by sumptuous and magnificent tombs. But among the Jews, to whom reference is made in the text, very particular attention was paid to the tombs of prophets and saints. Matt. xxiii. 29. Compare the note of Mr. Trollope on the passage,

of the righteous ;([67]) Ulysses, in Hecuba, ([68]) cared not how meanly he lived, so he might find a noble tomb after death. Great princes affected great monuments; and the fair and larger urns contained no vulgar ashes, which makes that disparity in those which time discovereth among us. The present urns were not of one capacity, the largest containing above a gallon, some not much above half that measure; nor all of one figure, wherein there is no strict conformity, in the same or different countries; observable from those represented by Casalius, Bosio, and others, though all found in Italy: while many have handles, ears, and long necks, but most imitate a circular figure, in a spherical and round composure; whether from any mystery, best duration, or capacity, were but a conjecture. But the common form with necks was a proper figure, making our last bed like our first; nor much unlike the urns of our nativity, while we

p. 73. On the practice of whitewashing, &c. he remarks:— "As pollution was incurred by touching a sepulchre (Numb. xix. 16.) the tombs of the Jews were annually whitewashed, and those of the more opulent beautified, as a caution against approaching them." In Egypt, where the vast burial-grounds, beautiful in their quiet solitude, may truly be called "cities of the dead," tombs were erected more splendid than palaces. There, moreover, as I have remarked in my description of the tombs of the kings at Thebes, ("Egypt and Mohammed Ali," vol. ii. p. 57. ff.) no objection to enter the dwellings of the dead was felt; and, at this day, I know of few spots on earth so productive of calm thoughts, and hushed and delightful feelings, as that mysterious valley, where the dust of the Egyptian kings reposes in their subterraneous apartments.—Ed.

([67]) Matthew, xxiii.

([68]) Euripides.

lay in the nether part of the earth,([69]) and inward vault of our microcosm. ([70]) Many urns are red, these but of a black colour, somewhat smooth, and dully sounding, which begat some doubt, whether they were burnt, or only baked in oven or sun: according to the ancient way in many bricks, tiles, pots, and testaceous works; and as the word *testa* is properly to be taken, when occurring without addition: and chiefly intended by Pliny, when he commendeth bricks and tiles of two years old, and to make them in the spring. Nor only these concealed pieces, but the open magnificence of antiquity ran much in the artifice of clay. Hereof the house of Mausolus was built, thus old Jupiter stood in the Capitol, and the statue of Hercules, made in the reign of Tarquinius Priscus, was extant in Pliny's days. And such as declined burning or funeral urns, affected coffins of clay, ([71]) according to the mode of Pythagoras, a way preferred by Varro. But the spirit of great ones was above these circumscriptions, affecting copper, silver, gold, and porphyry urns; wherein Severus lay, after a

([69]) Psalm lxiii.

([70]) This is a thought of remarkable beauty; and, perhaps, as the ancients were a curious and quaint people, the urns may have been designedly fashioned in the form of the womb, consistently with their notion that the earth was the great mother of all things.—Ed.

([71]) In Egypt coffins were frequently of oriental porphyry, enclosing another of the sycamore, or Pharaoh's fig-tree, the wood of which is almost everlasting. Alexander's coffin, originally of gold, was exchanged in later times for one of glass, his successors finding themselves in need of the precious metal. Coffins of clay are alluded to in the book of Job.—Ed.

serious view and sentence on that which should contain him.(72) Some of these urns were thought to have been silvered over, from sparklings in several pots, with small tinsel parcels; uncertain whether from the earth, or the first mixture in them.

Among these urns we could obtain no good account of their coverings; only one seemed arched over with some kind of brickwork. Of those found at Buxton some were covered with flints, some in other parts with tiles; those at Yarmouth Caster were closed with Roman bricks; and some have proper earthen covers adapted and fitted to them. But in the Homerical urn of Patroclus, whatever was the solid tegument,(73) we find the immediate covering to be a purple piece of silk. And such as had no covers might have the earth closely pressed into them, after which disposure were probably some of these, wherein we found the bones and ashes half mortered unto the sand and sides of the urn; and some long roots of quich or dog's-grass about the bones.

No lamps, included liquors, lachrymatories, or tear-bottles attended these rural urns, either as sacred unto the manes, or passionate expressions of

(72) Χωρήσεις τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ὃν ἡ οἰκεμένη ϗκ ἠχώρησεν. *Dion.*

(73) The learning of Sir Thomas Browne was somewhat superficial. The "solid tegument," about which he seems to have been in doubt, was gold: ἄλλεγον ἐς χρυσέην φιάλην. Iliad. ψ 253. and the covering cast over the urn in the tent, was not, as he supposes, a piece of purple silk, but a shroud of fine linen; ἑανῷ λιτί κάλυψαν. (Conf. Buttmann. Lexil. v. ἑανος, § 5.—Ed.

their surviving friends; (74) while with rich flames and hired tears they solemnized their obsequies, and in the most lamented monuments made one part of their inscriptions. (75) Some find sepulchral vessels, containing liquors, which time hath incrassated into jellies. For beside these lachrymatories, notable lamps, with vesses of oils; and aromatical liquors, attended noble ossuaries; and some yet retaining a vinosity and spirit in them, (76) which if any have tasted they have far exceeded the palates of antiquity. Liquors not to be computed by years of annual magistrates, but by great conjunctions and the fatal periods of kingdoms. (77) The draughts of consulary date were but crude unto these, and Opimian wine but in the must unto them. (78)

In sundry graves and sepulchres we meet with rings, coins, and chalices. (79) Ancient frugality

(74) This marks the distinction between the Roman urns and the British.—DOUGLAS.

(75) Cum lacrymis posuere.

(76) Lazius.

(77) About five hundred years. Plato.

(78) Vinum Opimianum annorum centum. Petron.

(79) In part a proof that the Nænia tumuli were not Roman.—DOUGLAS. But this is jumping too easily to a conclusion. Browne was mistaken in his notions of ancient frugality; for though the laws of the twelve tables prohibited the interment of gold with the dead, affection quickly overruled their decisions, and indulged its own bent. The law occurs in Cicero, De Legg. II. 24. "Neve aurum addito." And again: "Quoi auro dentes vincti esunt, ast im cum ollo sepelire urereve, se fraude esto;" on which see the notes of Turnebus, who observes that *im* is here used archaically for *eum*, and *se fraude*, for *sine fraude*. Cicero observes, that the exception of the gold wherewith the false teeth were fastened was *humane;* that is, as Kirchmann observes,

was so severe that they allowed no gold to attend the corpse, but only that which served to fasten their teeth. ([80]) Whether the opaline stone in this urn were burnt upon the finger of the dead, or cast into the fire by some affectionate friend, it will consist with either custom. But other incinerable substances were found so fresh that they could feel no singe from fire. These, upon view, were judged to be wood, but sinking in water, and tried by the fire we found them to be bone, or ivory. In their hardness and yellow colour they most resemble box, which in old expressions found the epithet of eternal,([81]) and perhaps in such conservatories might have passed uncorrupted.

That bay-leaves were found green in the tomb of St. Humbert, after a hundred and fifty years, was looked upon as miraculous.([82]) Remarkable it was unto old spectators, that the cypress of the

---

it freed children and friends from the painful necessity of pulling out of the heads of their deceased parents such false teeth as they might have made use of during life. For old people among the Romans supplied lost teeth with ivory ones, which were fastened in the head with gold. De Funer. Rom. III. 14. Conf. Mart. Epig. I. 73. However, the Decemviral laws fell, as I have said, into desuetude, and people buried what they pleased with the dead, rich garments, gold, and money of every kind. Terent. in Prol. Eunuch.—Plaut. in Pseud. Act. I. sc. 4. The practice, as might have been expected, gave rise to a class of resurrection-men, called τυμβορύχοι by the Greeks, (Synes. Epist. 143.) who subsisted, as many do in England, by plundering the grave.—Ed.

([80]) 12 Tabul. l. xi. de Jure sacro. Neve aurum addito. Quoi auro dentes vincti esunt, ast im cum ollo sepelire et urere, se fraude esto. xx. et xxi.

([81]) Plin. l. xvi. inter ξύλα ἀσαπῆ numerat Theophrastus.

([82]) Surius.

temple of Diana lasted so many hundred years. The wood of the ark and olive rod of Aaron were older at the captivity; but the cypress of the ark of Noah was the greatest vegetable antiquity, if Josephus were not deceived by some fragments of it in his days. To omit the moor-logs and fir-trees found underground, in many parts of England, the undated ruins of winds, floods, or earthquakes, and which in Flanders still show from what quarter they fell, as generally lying in a north-east position. ([83])

But though we found not these pieces to be wood, according to first apprehension, yet we missed not altogether of some woody substance, for the bones were not so clearly picked but some coals were found amongst them. A way to make wood perpetual, and a fit associate for metal, whereon was laid the foundation of the great Ephesian temple, and which were made the lasting tests of old boundaries and landmarks. Whilst we look on these we admire not observations of coals found fresh, after four hundred years.([84]) In a long-deserted habitation even egg-shells have been found fresh, not tending to corruption. ([85])

In the monument of King Childerick the iron relics were found all rusty and crumbling to pieces;

([83]) Gorop. Becanus in Niloscopio. The petrified woods, which I saw overthrown on the western shore of the Red Sea, had all their roots towards the east, and their top towards Egypt. Whether the cause of their overthrow, therefore, was storms or the overflowing of the sea, it is probable they fell altogether. They are now completely petrified.—Ed.

([84]) Of Beringuccio nella pyrotechnia.

([85]) At Elmeham.

but our little iron pins, which fastened the ivory works, held well together, and lost not their magnetical quality, though wanting a tenacious moisture for the firmer union of parts, although it be hardly drawn into fusion, yet that metal soon submitteth unto rust and dissolution. In the brazen pieces we admired not the duration but the freedom from rust and ill savour, upon the hardest attrition; but now exposed unto the piercing atoms of air, in the space of a few months they begin to spot and betray their green entrails. We conceive not these urns to have descended thus naked as they appear, or to have entered their graves without the old habit of flowers. The urn of Philopœmen was so laden with flowers and ribbons that it afforded no sight of itself.([86]) The rigid Lycurgus allowed olive and myrtle. The Athenians might fairly except against the practice of Democritus, to be buried up in honey, as fearing to embezzle a great commodity of their country, and the best of that kind in Europe. But Plato seemed too frugally politic, who allowed no larger monument than would contain four heroic verses, and designed the most barren ground for sepulture;([87]) though

([86]) Here the author forgets his locality, a usual custom with an exuberant fancy.—DOUGLAS.

([87]) And this I conceive to be the reason why the Britons selected the moor and waste lands for their dead. Vid. Næn.—DOUGLAS. Plato may probably have borrowed the hint from Egypt, where, very judiciously, all tombs are in the desert, bordering the valley of the Nile. Had it been otherwise, they would soon have disappeared; but, hewn as they are, in rocks, or sunk in the waste, they will probably prove colasting with the world.—ED.

we cannot commend the goodness of that sepulchral ground, which was set at no higher rate than the mean salary of Judas. Though the earth had confounded the ashes of these ossuaries, yet the bones were so smartly burnt that some thin plates of brass were found half melted among them, whereby we apprehend they were not of the meanest carcases, perfunctorily fired, as sometimes in military, and commonly in pestilence burnings; or after the manner of abject corpses, huddled forth and carelessly burnt, without the Esquiline Port at Rome, which was an affront contrived upon Tiberius, while they half-burnt his body;([88]) and in the Amphitheatre, according to the custom in notable malefactors; whereas Nero seemed not so much to fear his death, as that his head should be cut off, and his body not burnt entire.

Some, finding many fragments of skulls in these urns, suspected a mixture of bones. In none we searched was there cause of such conjecture, though sometimes they declined not that practice. The ashes of Domitian were mingled with those of Julia; of Achilles with those of Patroclus. All urns contained not single ashes. Without confused burnings they affectionately compounded their bones; passionately endeavouring to continue their living unions. And when distance of death denied such conjunctions, unsatisfied affections conceived some satisfaction to be neighbours in the grave, to lie urn by urn, and touch but in their

([88]) Sueton. in vitâ Tib. c. 73. et in amphitheatro semiustulandum. Not. Casaub. And below concerning Domitian see Sueton. in vitâ.

names. And many were so curious to continue their living relations, that they contrived large and family urns, wherein the ashes of their nearest friends and kindred might successively be received, at least some parcels thereof, while their collateral memorials lay in minor vessels about them.([89])

Antiquity held too light thoughts from objects of mortality, while some drew provocatives of mirth from anatomies,([90]) and jugglers showed tricks with skeletons; when fiddlers made not so pleasant mirth as fencers, and men could sit with quiet stomachs while hanging was played ([91]) before them. Old considerations made few mementoes by skulls and bones upon their monuments. In the Egyptian obelisks and hieroglyphical figures, it is not easy to meet with bones. The sepulchral lamps speak nothing less than sepulture; and in their literal draughts prove often obscene and antic pieces:([92]) where we find D. M.([93]) it is obvious to meet with sacrificing pateras, and vessels

([89]) See the most learned and worthy Mr. M. Casaubon upon Antoninus.

([90]) Sic erimus cuncti, &c. Ergo dum vivimus vivamus.

([91]) Ανχώνην παιζειν. A barbarous pastime at feasts, when men stood upon a rolling globe, with their necks in a rope, and a knife in their hands, ready to cut it when the stone was rolled away, wherein if they failed they lost their lives to the laughter of the spectators. Athenæus, IV. 42. p. 155. Casaub.

([92]) The same remark may be applied to the paintings found in the ancient tombs of Etruria and Egypt. Some of these are of a nature not to be described; but, after all, the majority are always of a different character. The object seems to have been to represent the whole circle of the deceased's history, his vices no less than his virtues, and generally, to judge from the paintings, the latter greatly outnumbered the former.—Ed.

([93]) Diis Manibus.

of libation, upon old sepulchral monuments. In the Jewish Hypogæum (91) and subterranean cell at Rome, was little observable besides the variety of lamps, and frequent draughts of the holy candlestick. In authentic draughts of Anthony and Jerome, we meet with thigh-bones and death's-heads: but the cemeterial cells of ancient Christians and martyrs were filled with draughts of Scripture stories; not declining the flourishes of cypress, palms, and olive: and the mystical figures of peacocks, doves, and cocks; but iterately affecting the portraits of Enoch, Lazarus, Jonas, and the vision of Ezekiel, as hopeful draughts, and hinting imagery of the resurrection; which is the life of the grave, and sweetens our habitations in the land of moles and pismires.

Gentile inscriptions precisely delivered the extent of men's lives, seldom the manner of their deaths, which history itself so often leaves obscure in the records of memorable persons. There is scarce any philosopher but dies twice or thrice in Laertius; nor almost any life without two or three deaths in Plutarch; which makes the tragical ends of noble persons more favourably resented by compassionate readers, who find some relief in the election of such differences.

The certainty of death is attended with uncertainties, in time, manner, place. The variety of monuments hath often obscured true graves, and cenotaphs confounded sepulchres. For, beside their real tombs, many have found honorary and empty sepulchres. The variety of Homer's monu-

(91) Bosio.

ments made him of various countries.([95]) Euripides([96]) had his tomb in Attica but his sepulture in Macedonia. And Severus([97]) found his real sepulchre in Rome, but his empty grave in Gallia.

He that lay in a golden urn([98]) eminently above the earth, was not like to find the quiet of these bones. Many of these urns were broken by a vulgar discoverer, in hope of inclosed treasure. The ashes of Marcellus([99]) were lost above ground, upon the like account. Where profit hath prompted no age hath wanted such miners, for which the most barbarous expilators found the most civil rhetoric.([100]) Gold once out of the earth is no more due unto it. What was unreasonably committed to the ground is reasonably resumed from it: let monuments and rich fabrics, not riches adorn men's ashes. The commerce of the living is not to be transferred unto the dead. It is not injustice to

([95]) This remark is ingenious, and probably is not far from the truth. The practice took its rise in Greece, where, if a great man fell abroad, and his ashes could not be obtained, an empty tomb (*κενοτάφιον*) was erected to his memory. There is a palpable error in the common text, which I have ventured to correct, he says:—"Euripides had his tomb in *Africa*." As this must be a mere typographical mistake for *Attica*, I have restored the true reading. Pausanius, speaking of certain tombs seen in his day between the Long Walls, observes that the cenotaph of Euripides was among them: *Καὶ μνῆμα Εὐριπίδου κενόν*. I. 2. 2. Bekk.—Ed.

([96]) Pausan. in Atticis.

([97]) Lamprid. in Vit. Alexand. Severi. c. 62.

([98]) Trajanus. Dion.

([99]) Plut. in Vit. Marcelli. 30.

([100]) The commission of the Gothish King Theodoric for finding out sepulchral treasure. Cassiodor. Var. l. 4. Ep. 18.

take that which none complains to lose, and no man is wronged where no man is possessor.

What virtue yet sleeps in this *terra damnata* and aged cinders, were pretty magic to experiment; these crumbling relics and long-fired particles superannuate such expectations. Bones, hairs, nails, and teeth of the dead, were the treasures of old sorcerers. In vain we revive such practices;([101]) present superstition too visibly perpetuates the folly of our forefathers, wherein unto old observation, this island was so complete that it might have instructed Persia.([102])

Plato's historian of the other world lies twelve days incorrupted, while his soul was viewing the large stations of the dead. How to keep the corpse seven days from corruption by anointing and washing, without exenteration, were an hazardable piece of art, in our choicest practice. How they made distinct separation of bones and ashes from fiery admixture, hath found no historical solution; though they seemed to make a distinct collection, and overlooked not Pyrrhus's toe. Some provision they might make by fictile vessels, coverings, tiles, or flat stones, upon and about the body. And in the same field, not far from these urns, many stones were found underground, as also by careful separation of extraneous matter, composing and raking up the burnt bones with forks, observable in that

([101]) It is clear from this passage that sorcery was practised in Browne's time.—DOUGLAS.

([102]) Britannia hodie eam attonitè celebrat tantis ceremoniis ut dedisse Persis videri possit. Plin. l. 29.

notable lump, of Galuanus Martianus,(103) who had the sight of the *vas ustrinum*, or vessel wherein they burnt the dead, found in the Esquiline field at Rome, might have afforded clearer solution. But their insatisfaction herein begat that remarkable invention in the funeral pyres of some princes, by incombustible sheets made with a texture of asbestos, incremable flax, or salamander's wool, which preserved their bones and ashes incommixed.(104)

How the bulk of a man should sink into so few pounds of bones and ashes, may seem strange unto any who considers not its constitution, and how slender a mass will remain upon an open and urging fire of the carnal composition. Even bones themselves reduced unto ashes, do abate a notable proportion; and consisting much of a volatile salt, when that is fired out, make a light kind of cinders. Although their bulk be disproportionable to their weight when the heavy principle of salt is fired out and the earth almost only remaineth; observable in sallow, which makes more ashes than oak; and discovers the common fraud of selling ashes by measure, and not by ponderation.

Some bones make best skeletons,(105) some bodies quick and speediest ashes.(106) Who would expect

(103) Topographiæ Roma ex Martiano. Erat et vas ustrinum appellatum quod in eo cadavera comburerentur. Cap. de Campo Esquilino.

(104) To be seen in Licet. de reconditis veterum lucernis.

(105) Old bones, according to Lyserus. Those of young persons not tall nor fat, according to Columbus.

(106) A solution of this sentence has been furnished by the opening of barrows, Vid. Nænia Britannia.—DOUGLAS.

a quick flame from hydropical Heraclitus? The poisoned soldier, when his belly brake, put out two pyres, in Plutarch.([107]) But in the plague of Athens([108]) one private pyre served two or three intruders; and the Saracens burnt in large heaps, by the king of Castile([109]) showed how little fuel sufficeth. Though the funeral pyre of Patroclus took up an hundred foot,([110]) a piece of an old boat burnt Pompey; and if the burthen of Isaac were sufficient for a holocaust, a man may carry his own pyre.

From animals are drawn good burning lights, and good medicines against burning;([111]) though the seminal humour seems of a contrary nature to fire, yet the body completed proves a combustible lump, wherein fire finds flame even from bones, and some fuel almost from all parts; though the metropolis of humidity([112]) seems least disposed unto it, which might render the skulls of these urns less burned than other bones. But all flies or sinks before fire almost in all bodies: when the common ligament is dissolved, the attenuable parts ascend, the rest subside in coal, calx, or ashes.

To burn the bones of the king of Edom for lime([113]) seems no irrational ferity; but to drink of the ashes of dead relations([114]) a passionate prodi-

([107]) In vita Gracc.
([108]) Thucydides.
([109]) Laurent. Valla.
([110]) Ἑκατόμποδον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα. *Iliad*, ψ. 164.
([111]) Speran. Alb. Ovor.
([112]) The brain. Hippocrates.
([113]) Amos, ii. 1.
([114]) As Artemisia of her husband Mausolus.

gality. He that hath the ashes of his friend, hath an everlasting treasure. Where fire taketh leave, corruption slowly enters. In bones well burnt, fire makes a wall against itself; experimented in coppels, and tests of metals which consist of such ingredients. What the sun compoundeth, fire analyzeth, not transmuteth. That devouring agent leaves almost always a morsel for the earth, whereof all things are but a colony; and which, if time permits, the mother elements will have in their primitive mass again.

He that looks for urns and old sepulchral relics, must not seek them in the ruins of temples, where no religion anciently placed them.([115]) These were found in a field, according to ancient custom in noble or private burial; the old practice of the Canaanites, the family of Abraham, and the bury-

([115]) Here Browne wanders widely from the truth. His reading lay too much among the compilers and antiquarians of modern times, and too little among the extant authors of antiquity, for him to be able with propriety to say what the ancients did or did not do. No doubt the common custom among the Romans, as the Campagna di Roma, and the environs of Pompeii still show, was, to bury their dead along the road-side, without their cities. But the exceptions were numerous. Prudentius contra Symmactrum, l. i. observes:—

> "Et tot templa Deûm Romæ, quot in urbe sepulchra
> Heroum numerare licet; quos fabula manes
> Nobilitat, noster populus veneratur adorat."

Indeed Arnobius, l. v. reproaches the Gentiles for their habit of polluting the temples with the ashes of men; and it may be almost demonstrated that temples generally arose over tombs, at least in Greece. Conf. Valer. Max. VIII. 16. And to what an extent the early Christians imitated the practice is well known.—Ed.

ing-place of Joshua, in the borders of his possessions; and also agreeable unto Roman practice to bury by high-ways, whereby their monuments were under eye: memorials of themselves, and mementos of mortality into living passengers; whom the epitaphs of great ones were fain to beg to stay and look upon them; a language, though sometimes used, not so proper in church-inscriptions.([116]) The sensible rhetoric of the dead, to exemplarity of good life, first admitted the bones of pious men and martyrs within church walls; which, in succeeding ages, crept into promiscuous practice. While Constantine was peculiarly favoured to be admitted into the church-porch; and the first thus buried in England was in the days of Cuthred.([117])

Christians dispute how their bodies should lie in the grave.([118]) In urnal interment they clearly escaped this controversy: though we decline the religious consideration, yet in cemeterial and narrower burying-places, to avoid confusion and cross position, a certain posture were to be admitted;([119]) which even pagan civility observed; the Persians lay north and south, the Megarians ([120]) and

---

([116]) Siste viator.

([117]) On the margin of the copy I print from, a Mr. Joseph Brown, contemporary, apparently, with the author, has this note: "Cuthred first buried in a church in England." He supposes the practice to have commenced with Cuthred's own funeral, not in "his days."—Ed.

([118]) Kirckmannus de Funer.

([119]) Vide Næn. Britan. The tumuli lie north and south.—Douglas.

([120]) Here Sir Thomas Browne is wrong in confounding the

Phœnicians placed their heads to the east; the Athenians, some think, towards the west, which Christians still retain. And Beda will have it to be the posture of our Saviour. That he was crucified with his face towards the west, we will not contend with tradition and probable account; but we applaud not the hand of the painter, in exalting his cross so high above those on either side; since hereof we find no authentic account in history, and even the crosses found by Helena pretend no such distinction from longitude or dimension.

To be knaved out of our graves, to have our skulls made drinking-bowls, and our bones turned into pipes, to delight and sport our enemies, are tragical abominations, escaped in burning burials.

Urnal interments and burnt relics lie not in fear of worms, or to be an heritage for serpents; in carnal sepulture corruptions seem peculiar unto parts, and some speak of snakes out of the spinal-marrow. But, while we suppose common worms in graves, it is not easy to find any there; few in church-yards above a foot deep, fewer or none in churches, though in fresh decayed bodies. Teeth, bones, and hair, give the most lasting defiance to

---

Phœnician with the Megarean practice; for, while the former was to place their dead looking toward the west,—*ἐπί δύσιν*, Schol. Thucyd. I. 5. vol. V. 309, 381.—the latter observed no certain rule: *ὡς ἔτυχε τεθαμμένους*. Ælian. Var. Hist. VII. 19. This same writer represents the Athenians as burying their dead with their faces towards the west, V. 14. Diog. Laert. in Vit. Solon. I. 2., states the contrary, and he is supported by the Scholiast on Thucydides.—Ed.

corruption. In an hydropical body, ten years buried in a church-yard, we met with a fat concretion, where the nitre of the earth, and the salt and lixivious liquor of the body, had coagulated large lumps of fat into the consistence of the hardest Castile-soap; whereof part remaineth with us. After a battle with the Persians, the Roman corpses decayed in few days, while the Persian bodies remained dry and uncorrupted. Bodies in the same ground do not uniformly dissolve, nor bones equally moulder; whereof in the opprobrious disease we expect no long duration. The body of the Marquess of Dorset seemed sound and handsomely cereclothed, that after seventy-eight years was found uncorrupted.([121]) Common tombs preserve not beyond powder: a firmer consistence and compage of parts might be expected from arefaction, deep burial, or charcoal. The greatest antiquities of mortal bodies may remain in petrified bones, whereof, though we take not in the pillar of Lot's wife, or metamorphosis of Ortellius,([122]) some may be older than pyramids, in the petrified relics of the general inundation. When Alexander opened the tomb of Cyrus, the remaining bones discovered his proportion, whereof urnal fragments afford but a bad conjecture, and have

([121]) Of Thomas, Marquess of Dorset, whose body, being buried 1530, was, 1608, upon the cutting open of the cerecloth, found perfect and nothing corrupted, the flesh not hardened, but in colour, proportion, and softness, like an ordinary corpse newly to be interred. Burton's Description of Leicestershire.

([122]) In his Map of Russia.

this disadvantage of grave interments, that they leave us ignorant of most personal discoveries. For, since bones afford not only rectitude and stability, but figure unto the body, it is no impossible physiognomy to conjecture at fleshy appendencies; and after what shape the muscles and carnous parts might hang in their full consistences. A full-spread Cariola shows a well-shaped horse behind; handsome formed skulls give some analogy of fleshy resemblance. A critical view of bones makes a good distinction of sexes. Even colour is not beyond conjecture, since it is hard to be deceived in the distinction of Negroes' skulls. Dante's characters (123) are to be found in skulls as well as faces. Hercules is not only known by his foot: other parts make out their comproportions, and inferences upon whole or parts. And, since the dimensions of the head measure the whole body, and the figure thereof gives conjecture of the principal faculties, physiognomy outlives ourselves, and ends not in our graves.

Severe contemplators, observing these lasting relics, may think them good monuments of persons past, little advantage to future beings. And, considering that Power which subdueth all things

(123) The poet Dante, in his view of purgatory, found gluttons so meagre and extenuated, that he conceived them to have been in the siege of Jerusalem, and that it was easy to have discovered *Homo*, or *Omo*, in their faces: M being made by the two lines of their cheeks, arching over the eye-brows to the nose, and their sunk eyes making O O, which makes up *Omo*. "Parean l'occhiaie anella senza gemme che nel viso de gli huomini legge huomo Ben'hauria quiui conosciuto l'emme."

uto itself, that can resume the scattered atoms, or identify out of any thing, conceive it superfluous to expect a resurrection out of relics. But the soul subsisting, other matter clothed with due accidents may salve the individuality; yet the saints, we observe, arose from graves and monuments about the holy city. Some think the ancient patriarchs so earnestly desired to lay their bones in Canaan, as hoping to make a part of that resurrection, and, though thirty miles from Mount Calvary, at least to lie in that region which should produce the first-fruits of the dead. And if, according to learned conjecture, the bodies of men shall rise where their greatest relics remain,[124] many are not like to err in the topography of their resurrection, though their bones or bodies be after translated by angels into the field of Ezekiel's vision, or, as some will order it, into the Valley of Judgment, or Jehosaphat.

CHAPTER IV.

Christians have handsomely glossed the deformity of death, by careful consideration of the body, and civil rites which take off brutal terminations. And, though they conceived all reparable by a resurrec-

[124] Tirin. in Ezek.

tion, cast not off all care of interment. And, since the ashes of sacrifices burnt upon the altar of God were carefully carried out by the priests, and deposited in a clean field; since they acknowledged their bodies to be the lodging of Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost, they devolved not all upon the sufficiency of soul existence; and, therefore, with long services and full solemnities concluded their last exequies, wherein, to all distinctions, the Greek devotion seems most pathetically ceremonious.([125])

Christian invention hath chiefly driven at rites which speak hopes of another life, and hints of a resurrection. And, if the ancient Gentiles held not the immortality of their better part,([126]) and some subsistence after death, in several rites, customs, actions, and expressions, they contradicted their own opinions; wherein Democritus went high, even to the thought of a resurrection, as scoffingly recorded by Pliny.([127]) What can be more express than the expression of Phocyllides?([128]) Or who would expect from Lucretius([129])

([125]) Rituale Græcum opera J. Goar, in officio exequiarum.

([126]) The immortality of the soul was scarcely less firmly believed in antiquity than at this day. Perhaps, indeed, there existed fewer sceptics then than now. See Plat. Repub. I. Tom. VI. p. 9. Phæd. Tom. V. p. 3. ff. Bekk.—Ed.

([127]) "Similis reviviscendi promissa a Democrito vanitas, qui non revixit ipse. Quæ, malùm, ista dimentia est, iterari vitam morte?" *Plin.* l. vii. c. 56.

([128]) *Καὶ τάχα δ' ἐκ γαίης ἐλπίζομεν ἐς φάος ἐλθεῖν λειψαν ἀποιχομένων*, et deincepsi.

([129]) "Cedit enim retro de terrâ quod fuit ante in terram," &c. *Lucret.*

a sentence of Ecclesiastes? Before Plato could speak, the soul had wings, in Homer, which fell not, but flew out of the body into the mansions of the dead; who also observed that handsome distinction of Demas and Soma, for the body conjoined to the soul and body separated from it. Lucian spoke much truth in jest, when he said, that part of Hercules which proceeded from Alcmena perished, that from Jupiter remained immortal. Thus Socrates was content that his friends should bury his body, so they would not think they buried Socrates, and, regarding only his immortal part, was indifferent to be burnt or buried.(150) From such considerations Diogenes might contemn sepulture; and, being satisfied that the soul could not perish, grow careless of corporeal interment. The Stoics, who thought that the souls of wise men had their habitation about the moon,(151) might make slight account of subterraneous deposition; whereas the Pythagorians and transcorporating philosophers, who were to be often buried, held great care of their interment. And the Platonics rejected not a due care of the grave, though they put their ashes to unreasonable expectations, in their tedious term of return and long set revolution.

(150) Plato, in Phæd.

(151) On the future condition of the soul, the opinion of the Stoics was particularly extravagant: they supposed it to survive the body, yet not to be immortal. The souls of fools soon burned out, after death; but those of wise men ascended to the moon, where they continued till the final conflagration of all things. Lipsi Physiol. Stoic. III. 11. t. iv. p. 989, ff.—Ed.

Men have lost their reason in nothing so much as their religion, wherein stones and clouts make martyrs; ([132]) and since the religion of one seems madness unto another, to afford an account or rationale of old rites, requires no rigid reader. That they kindled the pyre aversely, or turning their face from it, was a handsome symbol of unwilling ministration; that they washed their bones with wine and milk, that the mother wrapped them in linen and dried them in her bosom, the first fostering part and place of their nourishment; ([133]) that they opened their eyes towards heaven before they kindled the fire, as the place of their hopes or original, were no improper ceremonies. Their last valediction ([134]) thrice uttered by the attendants was also very solemn, ([135])

([132]) He here trenches on Hudibras's ground—

> "For some have worship'd rats, and some
> For that church suffer'd martyrdom."

In fact, human nature, in the matter of religion, is exposed to extraordinary difficulties; and genuine philosophy will sympathize with it, whatever may be its creed, and whatever its errors.—Ed.

([133]) Of this beautiful thought the germ is found in several classical writers. Thus Tibullus. I. 3.

> "Abstineas mors atra precor; non hic mihi mater
> Quæ legat in *mœstos* ossa perusta *sinus*."

Propertius, also, I. 17. 11. f. ed. Jacobs:—

> "An poteris siccis mea fata opponere ocellis?
> Ossaque nulla *tuo* nostra tenere *sinu*?"

And Seneca, Consol. ad Helviam, § 2. more in the spirit of Sir Thomas Browne:—"Modo in *eundem sinum*, ex quo tres nepotes emiseras, ossa trium nepotum recepisti."—Conf. Kirchmann, De Fun. Rom. III. 6. 313.—Ed.

([134]) Vale, vale, nos te ordine quo natura permittet sequemur.

([135]) Sir Thomas is remiss in the matter of authorities, and

and somewhat answered by Christians, who thought it too little, if they threw not the earth thrice upon the interred body. That in strewing their tombs the Romans affected the rose, the Greeks, amaranthus and myrtle; that the funeral pyre consisted of sweet fuel, cypress, fir, larix, yew, and trees perpetually verdant, lay silent expressions of their surviving hopes; wherein Christians, which deck their coffins with bays have found a more elegant emblem. For that tree, seeming dead, will restore itself from the root, and its dry and exuccous leaves resume their verdure again; which, if we mistake not, we have also observed in firs. Whether the planting of yew in church-yards hold not its original from ancient funeral rites, or as an emblem of resurrection from its perpetual verdure, may also admit conjecture.

They made use of music to excite or quiet the affections of their friends, according to different harmonies. ([136]) But the secret and symbolical hint

---

even careless in quotation. The words occur in Serv. ad Æneid. III. 68. and read correctly as follows:—"Vale. Nos te, ordine quo Natura permiserit, cuncti sequamur." Virg. Masvicii. I. 502. See also, in Kirchmann, III. 9. 333. an inscription of the greatest beauty, in which nearly the same words occur; and, in the following pages, examples of that affectionate wish that the turf might lie lightly on the grave of beloved friends.—Ed.

([136]) See Matt. xi. 23, and xi. 17. with the Rev. Mr. Trollope's note on the latter passage. Ovid, to whose poetical merits the critics have somehow or another been always unjust, has a fine remark on this subject. Fast. VI. 65.

> "Temporibus veterum tibicinis usus avorum
> Magnus, et in magno semper honore fuit.
> Cantabat fanis, cantabat tibia ludis:
> Cantabat mœstis tibia funeribus."

was the harmonical nature of the soul; which delivered from the body went again to enjoy the primitive harmony of heaven, from whence it first descended; which, according to its progress, traced by antiquity, came down by Cancer, and ascended by Capricornus.

They burnt not children before their teeth appeared, as apprehending their bodies too tender a morsel for fire, and that their gristly bones would scarce leave separable relics after the pyral combustion.([137]) That they kindled not fire in their houses for some days after, was a strict memorial of the late afflicting fire. And mourning without hope, they had a happy fraud against excessive lamentation, by a common opinion that deep sorrows disturbed their ghosts ([138])

That they buried their dead on their backs, or in a supine position, seems agreeable unto profound sleep, and common posture of dying; contrary to the most natural way of birth; nor unlike our pendulous posture, in the doubtful state of the womb.([139]) Diogenes was singular, who preferred a prone situation in the grave, and some Chris-

---

And I may add, that in the East the women who sing at marriages are likewise employed at funerals; and that I have been sometimes startled, in Cairo, at observing the same voices which I had heard chaunt a funeral hymn in the morning, singing an epithalamium in the afternoon.—Ed.

([137]) Vide Næn. Children found in graves.—Douglas.

([138]) Tu manes ne læde meos.

([139]) Thus we always find the Egyptians in their coffins; and the general practice of antiquity was the same. Diogenes, whose whole life had been one fierce struggle after singularity, very naturally wished to be equally singular in death. Diog. Laert. Vit.—Ed.

tians like neither, who decline the figure of rest, and make choice of an erect posture. ([140])

That they carried them out of the world with their feet forward, not inconsonant unto reason; as contrary unto the native posture of man, and his production first into it. And also agreeable unto their opinions, while they bid adieu unto the world, not to look again upon it; whereas Mahomedans, who think to return to a delightful life again, are carried forth with their heads forward, and looking toward their houses. ([141])

They closed their eyes as parts which first die or first discover the sad effects of death. But their iterated clamations to excite their dying or dead friends, or revoke them unto life again, was a vanity of affection; as not presumably ignorant of the critical tests of death, by apposition of feathers, glasses, and reflection of figures, which dead eyes represent not; which however not strictly verifiable in fresh and warm cadavers, could hardly elude the test, in corpses of four or five days.

That they sucked in the last breath of their expiring friends, was surely a practice of no medical institution, but a loose opinion that the soul passed out that way, and a fondness of affection from some Pythagorical foundation, that the spirit of one body passed into another, which they wished might be their own.([142])

That they poured oil upon the pyre was a toler-

([140]) Russians, &c.

([141]) Though this may very possibly be true, I neither observed the custom myself while in the country, nor do I know on what authority he makes the statement.—Ed.

([142]) Francesco Perucci. Pompe funebri.

rable practice, while the intention rested in facilitating the ascension; but to place good omens in the quick and speedy burning, to sacrifice unto the winds for a dispatch in this office, was a low form of superstition.

The archimime, or jester attending the funeral train, and imitating the speeches, gesture, and manners of the deceased, was too light for such solemnities, contradicting their funeral orations and doleful rites of the grave. ([143])

That they buried a piece of money with them as a fee of the Elysian ferryman was a practice full of folly; but the ancient custom of placing coins in considerable urns,([144]) and the present practice of burying medals in the noble foundations of Europe are laudable ways of historical discoveries in actions,

([143]) The practice alluded to in the text was no less extraordinary than ludicrous. Dionysius, of Halicarnassus, Antiq. Rom. l. ix. observes that, in the funeral of illustrious men, in addition to the other pomp and circumstance, he had observed the performances of satyric choruses, which, preceding the bier, danced the *sikinnis* on the way to the grave. On the nature of this dance see Jungermann's note on Pollux. IV. 99. p. 750. Of the jesters and mummers we find an account in Suetonius's description of the funeral of Vespasian, X. 19. In the exequial procession, he says, the arch-mummer Favo (*al.* Favor.) acted the character of the emperor, mimicking, as is customary, the action and language of the deceased. Having demanded of those who managed the affair how much the expenses would amount to, and learning that they would exceed £80,000 sterling, replied, that if they would give him £800 he would cast himself into the Tiber. See the same writer in Vit. Tiber. c. 57.—Ed.

([144]) Vide Næn. The coins found in these graves may indicate the attachment of the departed to the Roman institution.—Douglas.

persons, chronologies; and posterity will applaud them.

We examine not the old laws of sepulture, exempting certain persons from burial or burning; but hereby we apprehend that these were not the bones of persons planet-struck, or burnt with fire from heaven. No relics of traitors to their country, self-killers, ([145]) or sacrilegious malefactors; persons in old apprehension unworthy of the earth, condemned unto the Tartarus of hell and bottomless pit of Pluto, from whence there was no redemption.

Nor were only many customs questionable in order that to their obsequies, but also sundry practices, fictions, and conceptions, discordant or obscure, of their state and future beings; whether unto eight or ten bodies of men to add one of a woman, as being more inflammable and unctuously constituted for the better pyral combustion were any rational practice. Or whether the complaint of Periander's wife be tolerable, that wanting her funeral burning she suffered intolerable cold in hell, according to the constitution of the infernal house of Pluto, wherein cold makes a great part of their tortures; it cannot pass without some question.

Why the female ghosts appear unto Ulysses, before the heroes and masculine spirits? Why the Psyche or soul of Tiresias is of the masculine gender, who being blind on earth sees more than all the rest in hell; why the funeral suppers consisted

([145]) Hence Menelaus and Agamemnon, in Sophocles, oppose the burial of Ajax, who, in a fit of frenzy, had slain himself. Ajax. v. 104 ff.—Ed.

of eggs, beans, smallage, and lettuce, since the dead are made to eat asphodels about the Elysian meadows? Why, since there is no sacrifice acceptable, nor any propitiation for the covenant of the grave, men set up the deity of Morta, and fruitlessly adored divinities without ears? it cannot escape some doubt.

The dead seem all alive in the human hades of Homer, yet cannot well speak, prophecy, or know the living, except they drink blood, wherein is the life of man. And therefore the souls of Penelope's paramours, conducted by Mercury, chirped like bats; and those which followed Hercules made a noise but like a flock of birds.

The departed spirits know things past and to come, yet are ignorant of things present.([146]) Agamemnon foretells what should happen unto Ulysses, yet ignorantly inquires what is become of his own son. The ghosts are afraid of swords in Homer, yet Sybilla tells Æneas in Virgil, the thin habit of spirits was beyond the force of weapons. The spirits put off their malice with their bodies, and Cæsar and Pompey accord in Latin hell, yet Ajax, in Homer, endures not a conference with Ulysses; and Deiphobus appears all mangled in Virgil's ghosts; yet we meet with perfect shadows among the wounded ghosts of Homer.

Since Charon, in Lucian, applauds his condition among the dead, whether it be handsomely said of

([146]) Vide Næn. The crystal ball found in a grave, in which a chaste youth saw things to come, or spirits that divulged them.—DOUGLAS.

Achilles, that living contemner of death, that he had rather be a ploughman's servant than emperor of the dead? How Hercules's soul is in hell, and yet in heaven,(147) and Julius's soul in a star, yet seen by Æneas in hell, except the ghosts were but images and shadows of the soul, received in higher mansions, according to the ancient division of body, soul, and image or *simulachrum* of them both. The particulars of future beings must needs be dark unto ancient theories, which Christian philosophy yet determines but in a cloud of opinions. A dialogue between two infants in the womb concerning the state of this world, might handsomely illustrate our ignorance of the next, whereof methinks we yet discourse in Plato's den, and are but embryo philosophers.

Pythagoras escapes in the fabulous hell of Dante, (148) among that swarm of philosophers wherein, whilst we meet with Plato and Socrates, Cato is to be found in no lower place than purgatory. Among all the set, Epicurus is most considerable, whom men make honest without an Elysium, who contemned life without encouragement of immortality, and making nothing after death, yet made nothing of the king of terrors,

Were the happiness of the next world as closely apprehended as the felicities of this, it were a mar-

(147) The ancients supposed man to consist of three parts; body, soul (εἴδώλον,) and spirit. It was the *eidōlon* of Hercules that was in Hades; his spirit was with Jupiter in Olympus.—Ed.

(148) Del Inferno. cant. 4.

trydom to live; and unto such as consider none hereafter, it must be more than death to die, which makes us amazed at those audacities, that durst be nothing, and return into their chaos again. Certainly such spirits as could contemn death, when they expected no better being after, would have scorned to live had they known any. And therefore we applaud not the judgment of Machiavelli, that Christianity makes men cowards,([149]) or that with the confidence of but half dying, the despised virtues of patience and humility, have abased the spirits of men, which pagan principles exalted, but rather regulated the wildness of audacities, in the attempts, grounds, and eternal sequels of death; wherein men of the boldest spirits are often prodigiously temerarious. Nor can we extenuate the valour of ancient martyrs, who contemned death in the uncomfortable scene of their lives, and in their decrepit martrydoms did probably lose not many months of their days, or parted with life when it was scarce worth the living. For beside that long time past holds no consideration unto a slender time to come, they had no small disadvantage from the constitution of old age, which naturally makes men fearful; and complexionally superannuated from the bold and courageous thoughts of youth and fervent years. But the contempt of death from corporeal animosity promoteth not our felicity. They may sit in the orchestra, and no-

([149]) Machiavelli's contemporaries and countrymen were cowardly, but not because Christianity flourished among them. He had very little to complain of on that score.—Ed.

blest seats of heaven, who have held up shaking hands in the fire, and humanly contended for glory.

Meanwhile Epicurus lies deep in Dante's hell, wherein we meet with tombs enclosing souls which denied their immortalities. But whether the virtuous heathen, who lived better than he spake, or erring in the principles of himself, yet lived above philosophers of more specious maxims, lie so deep as he is placed, at least so low as not to rise against Christians, who believing or knowing that truth, have lastingly denied it in their practice and conversation, were a query too sad to insist on.([150])

But all or most apprehensions rested in opinions of some future being, which ignorantly or coldly believed, begat those perverted conceptions, ceremonies, sayings, which Christians pity or laugh at. Happy are they, which live not in that disadvantage of time, when men could say little for futurity, but from reason; whereby the noblest minds fell often upon doubtful deaths, and melancholy dissolutions; with these hopes Socrates warmed his doubtful spirits, against that cold po-

([150]) The philosophical errors of Epicurus were errors of speculation, and, in his own person, produced none of those ill effects which, nevertheless, flow naturally, I might say necessarily, from them. For men who bound their views by the horizon of this life will never prove heroes or patriots, or soar above the ambition of those "fat choughs," commemorated by Falstaff, whom it would content to be "grand jurors." It is the spiritual philosophies, based upon the principle that our lives shall run parallel with that of eternity, which beget public spirit, and that excellent frame of mind in which great and glorious actions are felt to be their own reward.—Ed.

tion; and Cato, before he durst give the fatal stroke, spent part of the night in reading the immortality of Plato, thereby confirming his wavering hand unto the animosity of that attempt.

It is the heaviest stone that melancholy can throw at a man, to tell him he is at the end of his nature; or that there is no further state to come, unto which this seems progessional, and otherwise made in vain. Without this accomplishment the natural expectation and desire of such a state were but a fallacy in nature; unsatisfied considerators would quarrel with the justice of their constitutions, and rest content that Adam had fallen lower, whereby by knowing no other original and deeper ignorance of themselves, they might have enjoyed the happiness of inferior creatures, who in tranquillity possess their constitutions, as having not the apprehension to deplore their own natures. And being framed below the circumference of these hopes, or cognition of better being, the wisdom of God hath necessitated their contentment :([151]) but the superior ingredient and obscured part of ourselves, whereto all present felicities afford no rest-

([151]) Montaigne, in his "Apologie de Raimond de Sebonde," draws a comparison between man and the inferior animals, and contends that they have greatly the advantage over us. He supposes that they despise us quite as much as we despise them; and observes, that when he played with his cat, as very frequently he did, puss very probably looked on him in the light of a toy no less than he did her. t. iv. p. 204. To this passage Butler alludes in the famous passage,

> "As Montaigne, playing with his cat,
> Complains she thought him but an ass,
> Much more she would Sir Hudibras."—Ed.

ing contentment, will be able at last to tell us we are more than our present selves; and evacuate such hopes in the fruition of their own accomplishments.

CHAPTER V.

Now, since these dead bones have already outlasted the living ones of Methesulah, and in a yard under ground, and thin walls of clay, out-worn all the strong and spacious buildings above it, and quietly rested under the drums and tramplings of three conquests, what prince can promise such diuturnity unto his relics, or might not gladly say,

Sic ego componi versus in ossa velim. ([152])

Time, which antiquates antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these minor monuments. In vain we hope to be known by open and visible conservatories, when to be unknown was the means of their continuation, and obscurity their protection. If they died by violent hands, and were thrust into their urns, these bones become considerable, and some old

([152]) Tibullus. III. 2.

philosophers would honour them,([153]) whose souls they conceived most pure, which were thus snatched from their bodies;([154]) and to retain a stronger propension unto them: whereas they wearedly left a languishing corpse, and with faint desires of reunion. If they fell by long and aged decay, yet wrapt up in the bundle of time, they fall into indistinction, and make but one blot with infants. If we begin to die when we live, and long life be but a prolongation of death, our life is a sad composition; we live with death, and die not in a moment. How many pulses made up the life of Methuselah, were work for Archimedes: common counters sum up the life of Moses's man.([155]) Our days become considerable like petty sums by minute accumulations; where numerous fractions make up but small round numbers; and our days of a span long make not one little finger.([156])

If the nearness of our last necessity, brought a nearer conformity unto it, there were a happiness in hoary hairs, and no calamity in half-senses. But the long habit of living indisposeth us for dying; when avarice makes us the sport of death,

---

([153]) Oracula Chaldaica cum scholiis Pselli et Phethonis Βίη λιπόντων σῶμα ψυχαὶ καθαρώτεραί. Vi corpus relinquentium animæ purissimæ.

([154]) The ghost in Hamlet maintains a different theory, and complains of being thus snatched away, with "all his imperfections on his head, unhouselled, unanointed, unanealed!"—Ed.

([155]) In the Psalm of Moses.

([156]) According to the ancient arithmetic of the hand, wherein the little finger of the right hand contracted, signified an hundred. Pierius in Hieroglyph.

when even David grew politically cruel, and Solomon could hardly be said to be the wisest of men. But many are too early old, and before the date of age. Adversity stretcheth our days, misery makes Alcmena's nights,(157) and time hath no wings unto it. But the most tedious being is that which can unwish itself, content to be nothing, or never to have been, which was beyond the malcontent of Job, who cursed not the day of his life, but his nativity. Content to have so far been, as to have a title to future being; although he had lived here but in an hidden state of life, and as it were, an abortion.

What song the syrens sang, (158) or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzzling questions,(159) are not beyond all conjecture. What time the persons of these ossuaries entered the famous nations of the dead, and slept with princes and counsellors, might admit a wide solution. But who were the proprie-

(157) One night as long as three.

(159) Homer has given us his version of their song. Odys. μ. 184—191. where, as Damm conceives, col. 3006, the bard describes his own poetry. Pope has translated it with great elegance and grace:

> "Stay, oh pride of Greece, Ulysses, stay!
> O, cease thy course, and listen to our lay!
> Blest is the man ordain'd our voice to hear,
> The song instructs the soul and charms the ear.
> Approach! thy soul shall into raptures rise!
> Approach! and learn new wisdom from the wise.
> We know whate'er the kings of mighty name
> Achieved at Ilion in the fields of fame;
> Whate'er beneath the sun's bright journey lies:
> Approach! and learn new wisdom from the wise."—Ed.

(159) The puzzling question of Tiberius unto grammarians. Marcel. Donatus in Suet. Κλυτὰ ἔθνεα νεκρῶν. Hom. Job.

taries of these bones, or what bodies these ashes made up, were a question above antiquarianism; not to be resolved by man, nor easily perhaps by spirits, except we consult the provincial guardians, or tutelary observators. Had they made as good provision for their names as they have done for their relics, they had not so grossly erred in the art of perpetuation. But to subsist in bones, and be but pyramidally extant, is a fallacy in duration. Vain ashes, which in the oblivion of names, persons, times, and sexes, have found unto themselves a fruitless continuation, and only arise unto late posterity, as emblems of mortal vanities, antidotes against pride, vain-glory, and maddening vices. Pagan vain-glories, which thought the world might last for ever, had encouragement for ambition, and finding no Atropos unto the immortality of their names, were never damped with the necessity of oblivion. Even old ambitions had the advantage of ours, in the attempts of their vain-glories, who acting early, and before the probable meridian of time, have by this time found great accomplishment of their designs, whereby the ancient heroes have already outlasted their monuments, and mechanical preservations. But in this latter scene of time we cannot expect such mummies unto our memories, when ambition may fear the prophecy of Elias,([160]) and Charles the Fifth can never hope to live within two Methuselahs of Hector([161])

([160]) That the world may last but six thousand years.

([161]) Hector's fame lasting above two lives of Methuselah, before that famous prince was extant.

And therefore restless inquietude for the diuturnity of our memories unto present considerations, seems a vanity almost out of date, and superannuated piece of folly. We cannot hope to live so long in our names as some have done in their persons, one face of Janus holds no proportion unto the other. It is too late to be ambitious. The great mutations of the world are acted, or time may be too short for our designs. To extend our memories by monuments, whose death we daily pray for, and whose duration we cannot hope, without injury to our expectations, in the advent of the last day, were a contradiction to our beliefs. We, whose generations are ordained in this setting part of time, are providentially taken off from such imaginations;([162]) and being necessitated to eye the remaining particle of futurity, are naturally constituted unto thoughts of the next world, and cannot excusably decline the consideration of that duration, which maketh pyramids pillars of snow, and all that is past a moment.

Circles and right lines limit and close all bodies, and the mortal right-lined circle([163]) must conclude and shut up all. There is no antidote against the opium of time, which temporally considereth all things. Our fathers find their graves in our short memories, and sadly tell us how we may be buried in our survivors. Grave-stones tell truth

([162]) This extraordinary fancy appears at times to have been cherished even by Lord Bacon, who now and then talks of our having fallen upon the evening of the world.—Ed.

([163]) Θ. The character of death.

scarce forty years. ([164]) Generations pass while some trees stand, and old families last not three oaks. To be read by bare inscriptions like many in Gruter,([165]) to hope for eternity by enigmatical epithets, or first letters of our names, to be studied by antiquaries who we were, and have new names given us, like many of the mummies, are cold consolations unto the students of perpetuity, even by everlasting languages.

To be content that times to come should only know there was such a man, not caring whether they knew more of him, was a frigid ambition in Cardan; ([166]) disparaging his horoscopal inclination and judgment of himself, who cares to subsist, like Hippocrates' patients, or Achilles' horses, in Homer, under naked nominations, without deserts and noble acts, which are the balsam of our memories, the *entelechia* and soul of our subsistences. To be nameless in worthy deeds exceeds an infamous history. The Canaanitish woman lives more happily without a name than Herodias with one. And who had not rather have been the good thief, than Pilate?

But the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity; who can but pity the founder of the pyramids? Hero-

([164]) Old ones being taken up, and other bodies laid under them.

([165]) Gruteri Inscriptiones Antiquæ.

([166]) Cuperem notum esse quod sim, non opto ut sciatur qualis sim. Card. in vita propria.

stratus lives that burnt the temple of Diana; he is almost lost that built it: ([167]) time hath spared the epitaph of Adrian's horse, confounded that of himself. In vain we compute our felicities by the advantage of our good names, since bad have equal durations; and Thersites is like to live as long as Agamemnon, without the favour of the everlasting register. Who knows whether the best of men be known? or, whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot, than any that stand remembered in the known account of time? The first man had been as unknown as the last, and Methuselah's long life had been his only chronicle.

Oblivion is not to be hired: the greater part must be content to be as though they had not been, to be found in the register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty-seven names make up the first story, and the recorded names ever since contain not one living century. The number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live. The night of time far surpasseth the day, and who knows when was the equinox? Every hour adds unto that current arithmetic, which scarce stands one moment. And, since death must be the Lucina of life, and even pagans could doubt whether thus to live were to die; ([168]) since our longest sun sets

([167]) This idea has been made use of by Shakspeare.—

"The aspiring youth that fired the Ephesian dome
Outlives in fame the pious fool that raised it."

ED.

([168]) Speaking of Bunyan, I have elsewhere observed, "His imagination was raised to the sphere in which Pythagoras and Plato had moved—the existence we lead here seemed to be a

at right descensions, and makes but winter arches, and therefore it cannot be long before we lie down in darkness, and have our light in ashes; since the brother of death daily haunts us with dying mementoes, and time, that grows old itself, bids us hope no long duration; diuturnity is a dream and folly of expectation.

Darkness and light divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory a great part even of our living beings; we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest strokes of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosities, miseries are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which, notwithstanding, is no unhappy stupidity. To be ignorant of evils to come, and forgetful of evils past, is a merciful provision in nature, whereby we digest the mixture of our few and evil days, and our delivered senses not relapsing into cutting remembrances, our sorrows are not kept raw by the edge of repetitions. A great part of antiquity contented their hopes of subsistency with a transmigration of their souls. A good way to continue their memories, while, having the advantage of plural successions, they could not but act something remarkable in such variety of beings, and, enjoying the fame of their passed selves, make accumulation of glory unto their last

---

species of death—our body a tomb—and the deliverance of the soul from this fleshly tabernacle the proper commencement of life." *Life of Bunyan*, p. 40. f.—Ed.

durations. Others, rather than be lost in the uncomfortable night of nothing, were content to recede into the common being, and make one particle of the public soul of all things, which was no more than to return into their unknown and divine original again. Egyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, contriving their bodies in sweet consistences, to attend the return of their souls. But all was vanity, feeding the wind, and folly.([169]) The Egyptian mummies, which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandize; Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams.([170])

In vain do individuals hope for immortality, or any patent from oblivion, in preservations below the moon: men have been deceived even in their flatteries above the sun, and studied conceits to perpetuate their names in heaven. The various cosmography of that part hath already varied the names of contrived constellations: Nimrod is lost in Orion, and Osiris in the dog-star. While we look for incorruption in the heavens, we find they are but like the earth; durable in their main bodies, alterable in their parts: whereof, beside comets and new stars, perspectives begin to tell tales. And the spots that wander about the sun, with Phaeton's favour, would make clear conviction.

([169]) Omnia vanitas et pastio venti, *νημὴ ἀνέμου, βόσκησις* ut olim Aquila et Symmachus. V. Drus. Eccles.

([170]) Alluding to the ancient use of mummy in physic, as vended by the Jews in those days.—DOUGLAS.

There is nothing strictly immortal but immortality; whatever hath no beginning may be confident of no end. All others have a dependent being, and within the reach of destruction, which is the peculiar of that necessary essence that cannot destroy itself; and the highest strain of omnipotency, to be so powerfully constituted as not to suffer even from the power of itself. But the sufficiency of Christian immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state after death, makes a folly of posthumous memory. God, who can only destroy our souls, and hath assured our resurrection, either of our bodies or names hath directly promised no duration. Wherein there is so much of chance, that the boldest expectants have found unhappy frustration; and to hold long subsistence, seems but a scape in oblivion. But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omiting ceremonies of bravery, in the infamy of his nature.

Life is a pure flame, and we live by an invisible sun within us. A small fire sufficeth for life, great flames seemed too little after death, while men vainly affected precious pyres, and to burn like Sardanapalus, but the wisdom of funeral laws found the folly of prodigal blazes, and reduced undoing fires, unto the rule of sober obsequies, wherein few could be so mean as not to provide wood, pitch, a mourner, and an urn.

Five languages secured not the epitaph of Gor-

dianus; the man of God lives longer without a tomb than any by one, invisibly interred by angels, and adjudged to obscurity, though not without some marks directing human discovery. Enoch and Elias, without either tomb or burial, in an anomalous state of being, are the great examples of perpetuity, in their long and living memory, in strict account being still on this side death, and having a late part yet to act upon this stage of earth. If in the decretory term of the world we shall not all die but be changed, according to received translation, the last day will make but few graves; at least quick resurrections will anticipate lasting sepulchres. Some graves will be opened before they be quite closed, and Lazarus be no wonder. When many that feared to die shall groan that they can die but once, the dismal state is the second and living death, when life puts despair on the damned; when men shall wish the coverings of mountains, not of monuments, and annihilation shall be courted.

While some have studied monuments, others have studiously declined them: and some have been so vainly boisterous, that they durst not acknowledge their graves; wherein Alaricus([171]) seems most subtle, who had a river turned to hide his bones at the bottom. Even Sylla, that thought himself safe in his urn, could not prevent revenging tongues, and stones thrown at his monument. Happy are they whom privacy makes innocent, who deal so with men in this world, that they are

([171]) Jornandes de Rebus Geticis.

not afraid to meet them in the next, who, when they die, make no commotion among the dead, and are not touched with that poetical taunt of Isaiah.[172]

Pyramids, arches, obelisks, were but the irregularities of vain-glory and wild enormities of ancient magnanimity. But the most magnanimous resolution rests in the Christian religion, which trampleth upon pride, and sits on the neck of ambition, humbly pursuing that infallible perpetuity, unto which all others must diminish their diameters, and be poorly seen in angles of contingency.[173]

Pious spirits who passed their days in raptures of futurity, made little more of this world than the world that was before it, while they lay obscure in the chaos of preordination and night of their forebeings. And if any have been so happy as truly to understand Christian annihilation, ecstasies, exolution, liquefaction, transformation, the kiss of the spouse, gustation of God, and ingression into the divine shadow, they have already had a handsome anticipation of heaven; the glory of the world is surely over, and the earth in ashes unto them.

To subsist in lasting monuments, to live in their productions, to exist in their names, and predicament of chimeras, was large satisfaction unto old expectations, and made one part of their elysiums. But all this is nothing in the metaphysics of true belief. To live indeed is to be again our-

---

[172] Isaiah, xiv.

[173] Angulus contingentiæ,—the least of angles.

selves, which being not only a hope but an evidence in noble believers, it is all one to lie in St. Innocents' church-yard,([174]) as in the sands of Egypt; ready to be anything, in the ecstasy of being ever, and as content with six feet as the moles of Adrianus.([175])

——— Tabesne cadavera solvat
An rogus haud refert.———LUCAN.

([174]) In Paris, where bodies soon consume.

([175]) A stately mausoleum or sepulchral pile built by Adrianus in Rome, where now standeth the Castle of St. Angelo.

THE END.

Joseph Rickerby, Printer, Sherbourn Lane.

PR
3327
A73
1841

Browne, (Sir) Thomas
Religio medici

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

Not wanted in RBSC